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THE FORTUNES  
OF THE  
SCATTERGOOD FAMILY.

BY ALBERT SMITH.

AUTHOR OF "THE ADVENTURES OF MR. LEDBURY,"  
"THE WASSAIL BOWL," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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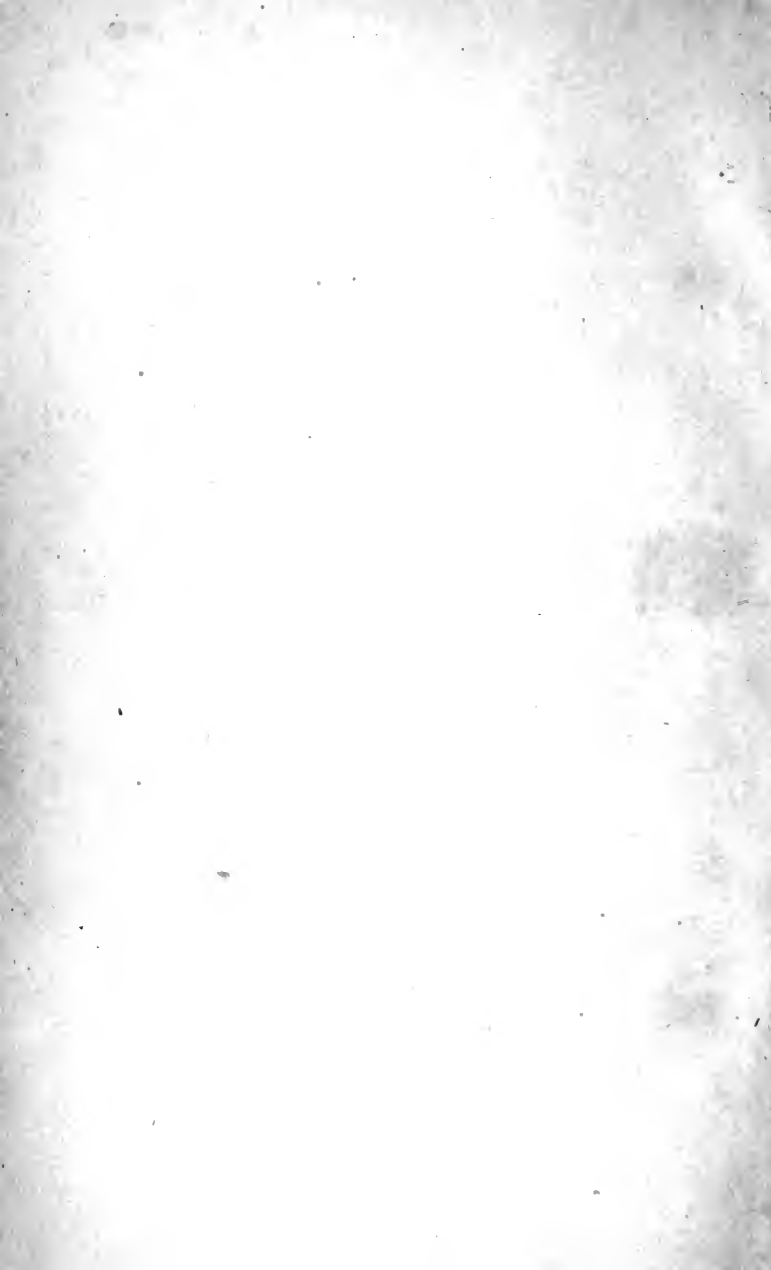
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THE FORTUNES  
OF THE  
SCATTERGOOD FAMILY.

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CHAPTER I.

THE WAGGON.

ABOUT four miles to the south of a line drawn from Canvey Island to Romford, running almost parallel to the flat marshy lands which border the river portion of the Essex coast, there is a low, dismal piece of country, intersected by dykes and narrow tracks, but little known even to those living within a short distance of its confines: for, assuredly, beyond some coasting traffic, there is not much to tempt any one to explore it, either from curiosity, or a love of rural scenery. Nor would its solitude offer any charms to the anchoret. A hermit, however greatly he might

admire his condition, would find it but a sorry region wherein to pitch his dwelling, unless he built his cell upon piles, and kept a small boat by the side of his couch, to be used upon emergencies. For the Thames, which is a great leveller in its way, and, like most levellers, generally not very particular in its notions of appropriation or acknowledgment—but, addicted to repudiation as it were, when it finds itself in a state of low water, after running upon its own banks—is apt to take possession of the different wretched cabins in the district upon a very short notice; producing various geographical transformations on the surface of the country. And these phenomena, although very interesting to the learned men who study the moon, and her influence, on the heights of Greenwich, are not considered as remarkably diverting by the inhabitants of these uninviting regions.

The greater part of the swampy moors which lie on each side of the road for some miles, is covered with bunches of rushes and rank grass; whilst the ground is everywhere moist



and plashy, where it does not actually sink into small hollows filled with slimy and stagnant water. Long, melancholy rows of pollard willows mark the courses of the various dykes and bourns running and intercrossing each other in all directions ; and here and there the roadway is obstructed by a gate or swing-bar, the use of which, beyond occasional obstruction, is unknown, since there is no one to receive toll ; nor do the few half-starved animals who graze about the waste appear desirous of straying to any of its distant pastures. The only living things that appear to thrive and fatten in this fenny region are the frogs ; and, when day goes down, they croak out their self-satisfaction at keeping their heads above water, in such numbers, and with such earnest vehemence, that their concert travels far and wide upon the wind, and the “marsh-bells,” as their song is termed by the natives of the adjoining places, may be heard upon still evenings at an incredible distance.

It was a sharp winter's night, in the beginning of January. Every pool and water-

course of the morass was frozen over; the rushes at their edges were powdered with frost as well; and the cart-tracks of the road were covered with a thin coat of ice, which shattered down by the least touch with a glass-like and hollow sound into the dry ruts beneath, to the great delight of the boys who loitered along the road collecting stray cattle, and thus procured all the excitement of breaking windows, without the unpleasantness of attending punishment. It was cold, bitter cold. The wind came frozen as it swept in biting gusts over the fettered marsh, or whistled amongst the slender branches of the pollards; and the very stars appeared shivering as they twinkled with wintry brightness in the clear blue sky. But, in the intervals of the wind's wrath all was dead and still; as if Nature, being locked up in the icy trammels of the frost until the sun chose to bail her out, was aware that at present she could not well help herself, and so maintained a dignified and impressive silence.

About eight o'clock on the cold evening in

question, a tilted waggon, with two horses, was traversing one of the roads above spoken of, in the direction of London. It was not going very fast, for the driver, almost benumbed, had got down from his seat, and was walking by the side of the horses, as he went through the series of violent gymnastics with the arms and legs, popularly supposed to generate caloric; with an accompanying forcible expiration, somewhat resembling the subdued noise of a locomotive engine, to which his steaming breath formed a not inapt adjunct, as it was visible with that of the horses in the gleam of the lantern which hung in front of his vehicle.

There were two passengers under the tilt of the waggon. One of them, to judge from his rustic dress of corduroy and velveteen, was apparently a countryman; and he wore a small round hat, which, with his costume generally, gave him the air of being something between an ostler and a railway navigator. And there was a look of mingled cunning and simplicity in his face, that rendered it somewhat difficult to determine from the ascendancy of which

attribute he might be classed as the greater knave or fool. The other was a tall, well-formed young man, of four-and-twenty, or thereabouts, partly in the attire of a sailor. His features were regular and handsome, in spite of the general air of dissipation which pervaded them, and the wandering and unsettled expression of his eyes. A profusion of dark curling hair shaded his expansive forehead, which every now and then contracted into a frown as he assumed the look of deep thought; but this soon passed away, and his countenance became as careless as before.

The travellers had cleared some of the vegetables and packages away that were immediately round them, and having drawn the canvas of the tilt closely together on every side, except where the lantern hung in front, that it might give part of its light to the interior, were stretched upon some straw, smoking in company. A foreign-looking bottle was placed between them, to which they occasionally applied their lips, and then again relapsed into the contemplation of the thin volume of smoke

which curled upwards from their pipes, and filled the waggon with its fumes.

“Ugh !” exclaimed the countryman after a long pause, coughing as he spoke, “I shall be stifled if we don’t get a go of fresh air. I expect you won’t mind it neither, young man ?”

“Deuce a bit !” replied the other : “it’s all the same to me what I breathe, short of brimstone. Have it open, if you like.”

“How’s us going on, Tom ?” continued the first speaker, as he pushed the tarpaulin on one side, and addressed the waggoner.

“Oh ! right enough,” was the reply ; “you haven’t got a drop of the brandy to spare, I reckon, have you ?”

“What’s the use of asking if you think so ? catch hold !” answered the passenger, handing him the bottle down.

The driver took a draught at the flask, which did not appear likely to come to a termination, if a violent fit of coughing had not interrupted him.

“Ah ! that’ll do,” he said, as soon as he

could speak ; “ we shall get on now. Hark ! there’s a clock going eight ; that must be Romford.”

“ That’s not Romford, I’m sure ! ” exclaimed the young man, as the sound of some distant bell came over the moor.

“ Do you know this part of the world, then, master ? ” asked the countryman.

“ No—yes—a little. That is, I did once,” returned his companion, with a half-melancholy voice.

The waggoner approached his vehicle, and beckoning to the countryman, they communed together in a low voice for about a minute. When this was finished, the latter drew down the tarpaulin, and they once more enclosed themselves in the interior.

“ I hope, as we overtook you, and gave you a cast, you’ll keep all dark if you see anything on the journey, pardner,” said the rustic.

“ Oh ! I’m safe enough,” replied the other, laughing. “ I don’t know where I should have wandered to if you had not come by, so I owe you something.”

“Did you come from Rochford?”

“No; I got a boat to drop me on the coast. I don't want to be seen in the large places. Perhaps I should have to stay there longer than I liked. I believe the Goodwin Sands was the last port I touched at, the night before last. There are no debts to be paid there, though, except Nature's.”

“Good!” said the other, with an approving nod, as he poked his finger into the bowl of his pipe. And then, after a short pause, he added, “May I make bold to ask your name?—mine's Bolt, though some calls me Cricket, because they hear of my being about, but can never lay hold of me.”

This voluntary confidence appeared worthy of a return, and the young man replied,

“Well, you may call me Vincent, if you like. That name will do as well as any other.”

“Then I think, Mr. Vinson, you'd best shut your eyes for a minute or two, if you don't want 'em shocked.”

The waggon stopped whilst he was speaking, and Bolt got out, taking the lantern down with

him. They were close to a watercourse that ran underneath the road by a brick arch. The driver, guided by some apparently unimportant sign, drew an iron bar from under the waggon, similar to those used for fixing hurdles in the ground, and proceeded to break the ice with it. This done, he drew out three or four small casks, of about two gallons each, which he handed to his associate, who immediately put them into the cart, and then climbing in after them, stowed them away at the far end, covering them with a quantity of turnips, which formed part of the load. And then he resumed his place in the interior, and the waggon once more went on, as if nothing had occurred—the whole transaction scarcely occupying two minutes.

“That’s how we get spirits from garden-stuff,” observed Mr. Bolt, upon taking his pipe again; “and that’s our private cellar. A tub bust once, and the frogs got drunk with brandy-and-water. He! he! I never see such a go!”

This occurrence, whether it ever happened, or was merely called up to divert his fellow-



traveller, excited Mr. Bolt's risibility to a great degree, only checked by what he termed a thimbleful of brandy, which, from its quantity, was rightly named, as it would certainly have assisted to sew up anybody else, whose head was less spirit-proof, if repeated often. And then, discovering that his pipe was exhausted, after several ineffectual attempts to arrange himself in an easy position, he gave two or three preparatory yawns, and was soon asleep ; whilst his fellow-traveller was not long in following his example, albeit the springs of the waggon had not been contrived with the greatest view to luxurious travelling. The driver, too, whose exercise had sufficiently warmed him, assumed a sort of rope-dancer's position upon one of the shafts ; and, beguiling the journey with a song without an end, which he set to an extempore melody, pursued his journey towards the metropolis.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE MARKET BREAKFAST HOUSE.

It was past midnight before the passengers in the waggon woke up from their sleep ; and then, as they looked out of the front, they found by the lights and buildings on either side of the road, that they were approaching London. The driver appeared to have fallen in with a friend, who was now walking with him at the side of the horses ; and Bolt, after a few words of salutation, and two or three enigmatical inquiries, turned his conversation to his companion.

“What are you thinking of doing, or where are you going in town, master ?” he inquired.

“I wish I could tell you,” returned Vincent,

to give the speaker his own name. "I expect there is little for me to do in London."

"There's a good deal for everybody," added Bolt, "only they don't know how to set about it. I've been in business in London fifteen year, and so I ought to know."

"I thought you were a countryman," observed his companion. "You have a Yorkshire accent."

"Like enough—like enough," replied Bolt. "I was born at Sheffield, and goes there now and then for goods, when my stock is out."

"And what line of business are you in?" asked Vincent.

"Oh, the general; but more especially in dodges, according to the state of the pewter. When that's flush, I sell Birmingham spoons and cheap ironmongery in a tilted cart round about London, on Saturday nights, and catch old birds with chaff. If the funds isn't up, I decide celebrated wagers between great sporting characters, and get rid of fifty gold wedding-rings before six o'clock, at the corner of the Quadrant; and when it's quite low water,

I mounts a pair of high-starched gills, and an uncommon clean apron, and comes the very respectable mechanic, as know'd better days."

"And you find that last pay?"

"Oh! out and out, if it's under a gas-lamp in front of a public. People is sure to have change either going in or coming out; and when they gets a little how-is-you-by-this-time, as the saying is, it makes them feel for a fellow-creature in distress. That's the time for congreves to go off."

The waggon kept on through Mile End, and long straggling Whitechapel, in which there was now little stirring. The lights over the gin-shops were extinguished, and all their shutters closed, except in the immediate neighbourhood of the cab-stands. And here none of the drivers were at their posts, but had taken refuge from the cold in the taproom of the nearest night-house; or had converted their own cabs into private sleeping-rooms. The waterman was the only token of humanity that appeared, as he stumped about amongst his tubs, and the wretched vehicles and animals

under his protection, in a fashionable wrapper, formed from a sack with three holes cut in it, through which he put his head and arms, and a pair of hayband gaiters, with a covering of the same fabric on his head, which looked something between a beehive and a chimney-pot. Even the houseless professors of lithographic mendicancy, who drew from Nature upon stone, and braved the cold in a wonderful manner during the day, as they depicted mackerel on the pavement in gay-coloured pigments, accompanied by flourishing statements of their being reduced to the last extremity, over which they assumed the position of the dying gladiator, until literally ordered by the authorities to walk their chalks by shuffling them out,—even these found the sharp night air too much for their stoicism, and slunk and burrowed into hidden corners of outhouses, and unfinished buildings, where, herding together like animals, they attended the next day of incertitude, as to the means by which the crust should be procured, in shivering and darkness.

At last, after a slow progress through the

city, for the horses were weary with their lengthened journey, the waggon arrived at Covent Garden market. Here all was life and movement; one of the divisions of restless London that never slept. A light snow was falling, which twinkled by the gas-lamps as it descended upon the heavily-laden carts of vegetables surrounding the quadrangle, awaiting the daybreak to be unladen—a process which at one or two points was already going on. Within the market several of the people had built up rough tents of baskets and tarpaulin, beneath which they sought to catch an hour or two of dozing before their labours commenced, upon a bed of dry fern, over a mattress of vegetables. Here and there charcoal-fires were burning, which threw a red and not unpicturesque light over the various groups, as the wind swept keenly through the avenues, and blew their embers into transient brightness; and at these spots a cheap breakfast was being doled out to waggoners and porters, who huddled round the stall. Occasionally a burst of revelry from some of the last frequenters of

the night-taverns in the neighbourhood, as they made their exit therefrom, echoed along the piazzas; and now and then angry words passed between these belated convivialists and the owners of the vegetables, respecting the right of possession to various bunches of esculent roots which the former light-hearted individuals wished to appropriate unto themselves, and render applicable to the performance of various diverting pastimes. But these differences of opinion usually commenced with challenges to ordeal by battle, and terminated in the nearest gin-shop; wherein the provokers of the disagreement proved that they were real gentlemen, not at all proud, and of noble and forgiving natures.

As the waggon stopped, the man who had walked with the driver for the latter part of the journey, brought a small covered truck to its side, and receiving the tubs which they had taken in upon the road, soon disappeared. The vegetables were soon shot out behind, in a very unceremonious manner, upon the ground; it was evident they formed the least important

portion of the load. And then Bolt approached his fellow-traveller, who had descended, and was leaning against one of the pillars, and inquired where he thought of going.

“You could have a bed in the waggon,” he added; “but we must be on the move again, as soon as the horses are all right. I don’t know exactly where to send you.”

“Oh, don’t trouble yourself about me, my good friend,” said the other, in a good-tempered tone. “I know London well enough. I have a home in it somewhere, only I don’t exactly know how I should be received if I were to go there. Besides, this is rather an unholy hour to ring up your governor when he don’t expect you.”

“The illuminated clock says a quarter to three,” observed Bolt. “It don’t get warmer, neither,” he continued, stamping his feet upon the ground. “Phew! I’m almost sorry I ain’t little enough to get inside the gas-lamps; it do look comfortable there, don’t it?”

“I wish I could offer you something for the lift you’ve given me,” said Vincent; “but



I'm about as hard up as anybody can well be ; and, what is worse, I don't know very well at present how I am to look for much more. I can only give you my thanks."

"Don't put yourself out now about that," said Bolt ; "all we asks is, keep dark, as I said, about the journey. And if you get regularly stumped, and ain't particular what you turns your hand to, you'll hear of me there : only you needn't say so."

He put a dirty card of some public-house at Rotherhithe into his companion's hand as he spoke ; and then wishing him good-night, he took one of the horses, which the waggoner had unharnessed during this brief conversation, whilst his fellow took the other, and they disappeared round one of the corners of the market.

Vincent Scattergood—for such was the name of the individual whom we have presented to the reader,—remained for some little time after his late companions had departed in a state of blank incertitude as to his destination for the night. There were hotels, it is true, in every direction ; and bright lights in the entrances,

albeit the shutters were closed, proved that all the inmates had not yet retired. But his purse was at present exceedingly slender; and they were beyond his means. Nor did there appear to be an available nook in the market unoccupied, except the more exposed portions, on which a tolerably thick layer of snow had now settled, turning the heaps of vegetables, as seen through the different porticos, into cosmoramic representations of Mont Blanc. Had there been, Vincent would have availed himself of it; for he was not over-particular.

After a quarter of an hour's rumination, chewing the cud of the plans he had been previously forming, he took his bundle, and having strolled vaguely up and down the piazza two or three times, turned into a house of public entertainment, the doors of which were invitingly on the swing, and its business apparently in full play. It was an early breakfast-house, frequented by the market-people; or rather a very late one, for its chief trade commenced at midnight, and continued until commerce and animation were once more in full vigour.

There was a long apartment divided into boxes, each containing a narrow table, which nobody could sit close to, but required the telescopic arms of a polypus to reach what was on it, after the most approved style of tables in tea-gardens and coffee-houses generally. And on these tables, which were void of cloth, were dogs'-eared periodicals, transparent from the frequent contact of adipose toast, or ornamented with arabesque rings of evaporated coffee, produced by careless guests, who turned the weekly unstamped journal of Modern Athens, and the small-priced repertory of the information-spreading committee into temporary d'Oyleys. Neither were traces of the embryo chick, in its earliest stage of gestation, absent. In some of these boxes customers were discussing market topics; in others, cups of dark and unknown beverages, presumed by clever analytical chemists to be infusions of parched peas, sweetened with treacle. And in others, again, a few individuals were indulging in a heavy slumber, pillow-ing their heads upon the pewter salt-cellars, or black tin waiters, as they awaited the open-

ing of the market, or the advent of another day of homeless want and misery.

A love of exclusiveness pervades all grades of life, however widely separated their degrees in the scale of society. The aristocrat adopts it to show his sense of the true security of his position, which enables him to act as he pleases; the would-be patrician, in the dread of losing the finely-poised station that he has attained, which may be turned by the slightest breath. And the radical, who prates aloud in forced images, —the verbal fulcrum, as he believes, upon which the world shall be moved by the lever of public opinion,—and rates the pride of those alone above him, whose sphere he cannot reach, shrinks equally from the touch of his inferiors, and believes that in himself alone is centred the general level of society, to which the higher classes must succumb, whilst those below him ought to elevate themselves to his standard.

And this spirit was ministered to in the market coffee-house. For at the end of the long room there was another of smaller dimensions, with a fire and tables, for those who were

willing, by the most trifling extra outlay, to command the additional attention which their increased respectability called for. Into this division of the establishment Vincent entered; more, however, from the boxes in the lower room being occupied, than any exclusive feeling of his own; and, taking his seat by the fire, ordered some coffee.

There were only three other persons in the apartment. At the extreme end a woman was relating an uninteresting and interminable story a hoarse bronchial voice, to her male companion, and before the fire was a man enveloped in a faded cloak, which was wrapped closely about him, his head alone appearing above the French, or dirty, grey collar, which looked like the skin of an unclean white rabbit that had had all its hair curled. He took little notice of Vincent as he entered, but continued apparently looking very hard at nothing upon the mantelpiece. His hair and whiskers, which might have been imitation chinchilli for aught anybody could have told to the contrary, betrayed no knowledge of comb or brush; and his boots, which

were the only other tokens of his toilet that appeared, were of the curtailed fashion, as appeared from the ridge which they threw up at the hee and instep, under his tightly-strapped trowsers.

But, although to vulgar eyes he gazed at vacuity, yet was the brain of this really great man all the time in full activity. For his imagination had filled the mantel-piece with living mobs and characters. Bandits clutched in desperate struggles to its marble-edge; British seamen bore defenceless females along the patterns of the paper; and unexpected heroes appeared from crinks and crannies in the wall, to the great confusion of the rest. Every volute of smoke, as it vanished up the chimney, was, to him, peopled with sylphs and demons; ships were foundering on the coals: persecuted servant-maids escaping over the hobs, and scenes of varied and surpassing effect forming in the embers. And in the glowing light abstruse French words, unintelligible as the writing on the wall, perpetually appeared to perplex his gaze, and lead the mind

into fresh labyrinths of confusion. His brain was now throbbing to invent some new situation, which the minor theatres would produce for its intensity, and placard on the hoards and walls of great thoroughfares, in startling cartoons, on the succeeding Sunday. For he was a dramatic author.

Vincent Scattergood finished his very modest repast, and drawing his chair round from the table, placed it before the fire, as he clapped his hands together in its warmth. The sound startled the dramatist from his visions; but it was a noise pleasing to his ears, and his heart opened to the gratuitous applause with which his last mental effect had been greeted.

“It’s a very cold night, sir,” he observed, as he got up a little corresponding applause, similar to that subdued expression of approbation which he was accustomed to institute in obscure parts of the theatre—suburbs of the pit and recesses of dark boxes—on the first nights of his productions. “It’s a very cold night, sir.”

It was a grand truth, which there was no denying, and Vincent acquiesced in its justice.

“From the sea, sir, I presume?” continued the author, as he looked at Vincent’s semi-nautical costume.

“I have been knocked about aboard ship for a few months,” replied Vincent. “I landed yesterday—or rather the day before, for the time is getting on.”

“Ah! indeed,” returned the other; “you have seen the Flying Dutchman without doubt.”

“Indeed I have not,” said young Scattergood. “But I believe I am the only person who has been to sea that never did.”

“Immense effect; that vessel, that looked as if it was going to run down the house. You could not—excuse me, though, if I give you my card. Possibly my name is not unknown to you.”

And, so saying, he drew a solitary card from his pocket, and gave it to Vincent, who read the address, “Mr. Glenalvon Fogg, Dramatic Author, Cheshire Cheese, Vinegar Yard.”

“I do not reside at the Cheshire Cheese myself,” observed Mr. Fogg; “a house of call



for playwrights, sir. The drama is on the decline, and author and under-carpenter now move in the same groove—so to speak—of the theatre. My object in taking the liberty of addressing you was, as a nautical man, to ask your advice. You have doubtless seen the shark of the Atlantic?”

“I have only cruised about the German Ocean,” said Vincent; “they once tried to point out the kraken to me, off Norway.”

“Pardon me,” said Mr. Fogg. “I wished to ask if you knew of any good situation that you thought might suit.”

“I wish I did, for my own sake,” replied Vincent. “I should only be too glad to take it. I do not know yet where I am to hide my head to-night; it is a case of hard-up.”

Mr. Fogg perceived that his meaning was not precisely understood. He gazed at the fire again for some minutes, with his brains enveloped in a wrapper of mighty thought, and then observed,

“I believe we can mutually accommodate each other, sir; I am at present engaged on a

nautical piece, of intense interest ; but never having been to sea, I have some little doubt about the propriety of my language. Taking a reef out of your keel, or hoisting your anchor hard a-port, are difficult things to manage, although we can shiver timbers and belay, or avast-heaving, with safety."

"I suppose you want me to direct you, then?" said Vincent, smiling at his new friend's remarks.

"Precisely so ; and, in return, I can offer you for a night or two such accommodation as my lowly roof affords ; board I must leave to yourself."

"Well, it 's a bargain," said Vincent. "To be frank with you, I have come back sooner than I ought, and do not care much to show my face at home—at least, at present. I will see of what use I can be—at all events, for a couple of days."

The small reckoning on either part was paid ; and Mr. Fogg, who had been awaiting the visit of some rustic lessee, with money for the performance of his pieces, according to appoint-

ment, but who never came, left the coffee-shop with his new companion.

“The true cosmopolite is less suspicious of an acquaintance formed in this manner,” thought Mr. Fogg, “than the man of limited mind. Besides, I have nothing to lose but my ideas.”

And, piloting the other through one or two narrow and ill-conditioned streets, the dramatic author at last stopped before the open portal of the crazy tenement, at the very summit of which the apartment which he termed his lowly one was situated.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY OF THE CHICKSANDS.

MORNING broke in freezing brightness upon the expanse of Kennington Road. Omnibuses densely packed with the city-bound colonists of Brixton and Clapham, swayed their unwieldy bulks along the snowy thoroughfare, leaving imitation railroads on the ground behind them ; and their conductors returned provoking shakes of the head to the hail of belated pedestrians, who saw not that they were full, by reason of the tangible breath that crystallized on their windows. Boys forsook the footpaths, and selected perilous gutters at the side to progress on ; or stored up compressed ammunition in ambush for the Tooting carrier. Congealed cabmen threw sackcloth over their shoulders, and careful housekeepers strewed ashes before

their doors : whilst apprentice butchers, with glowing faces, and hands as red as the juicy meats they carried, performed quiet dances upon the door-steps, until their signal was answered ; and then stayed not for converse with the ruddy handmaidens who replied to their summons, but hurriedly bolted off, whistling half-frozen melodies, and making feudal and uninvited incursions upon the adjacent sliding-grounds of junior lads. The sun himself looked cold as he threw his canopy of wintry light over the dome of Bedlam : many-armed direction-lamps caught up his rays, together with the newly-rubbed brasswork of surrounding cabs ; but the beams were flung back with a chaste, subdued light from the zinc plate that marked the residence of “ CHICKSAND, COAL AND WINE MERCHANT.”

Had Mr. Chicksand lived in a country town, his neighbours would possibly have expended much of their time, and powers of conjecture, in endeavours to discover whereabouts the extensive commodities that formed Mr. Chicksand's merchandise, were stored. For the

house, which was of moderate dimensions, being of two windows in breadth, with a balcony on the first-floor, which looked somewhat as if a large drawing-room fender had fixed itself there when the house had been turned out of window in some remote convulsion, possessed but limited accommodations for pipes and chaldrons. So that most probably the coals and wine were in the barges and docks on the river, and Mr. Chicksand's regular departure from his private residence at half-past eight each morning, was to go and look after them, or assist in the disposal of many tons and dozens. And, besides, had he wished to have kept his coals even in his upper apartments, he could not have done so, for they were usually occupied by separate families of those social victims, called lodgers, upon whom, without exactly being cannibals, the Chicksands lived. And when a new tenant arrived, the Chicksands fattened on him, and made festivity; although at other times they, figuratively, picked up the rice, grain by grain, like the ghoul of the Eastern story.

Mr. Chicksand had departed upon his commercial enterprises; and his helpmate, having picked out four eligible pieces of coal from the scuttle, and placed them carefully on the fire, in such a position that they should not consume their substance in too great luxury, descended to the kitchen. And here her first care was to remove some cinders from the range, and screw the iron cheeks nearer together, until they somewhat resembled her own, and brought the fire to a column of embers, instead of a body; all which was the more remarkable, considering her husband was himself a coal-merchant, and, in the eyes of the world, had mountains of Hetton's and countless tons of Lambton's at his own disposal. This done, Mrs. Chicksand called to the maid, who was polishing her face and a fender with black lead in an adjoining cavern.

"Lisbeth!" cried the mistress; "Lisbeth! what are you at?"

"Cleaning Mr. Bodle's fender, 'm," was the answer.

Mr. Bodle was a professor of music, the

whispered editor of the Weekly Pitchpipe, and lived in the back parlour.

“Then let Mr. Bodle clean his fender himself, and come in here. We can’t look after any Bodles now. What ’s he want his fender cleaned to-day for, I should like to know?”

“He’s going to lend his room to Mr. Snarry to-night, ’m, for the ladies to put their cloaks in.”

“Umph!” said Mrs. Chicksand, in a tone of mollified dissatisfaction, “it’s a pity somebody don’t lend Mr. Bodle a little money in return, and perhaps he would settle for the last fortnight. I suppose Mr. Snarry has asked him, then, to meet his friends.”

“I think he has,” replied Lisbeth; “leastwise, he revived his coat last night with some anticardamums and a toothbrush. I see him doing it through the ventilator.”

And the domestic assistant tittered at the reminiscence; whilst Mrs. Chicksand walked about the kitchen upon a tour of inspection, peeping into all the vegetable dishes, and lifting up all the inverted basins on the dresser, which



appeared to have been set as traps for catching brass thimbles, cap-edgings, and tangled skeins of thread.

"How 's the bread this morning, Lisbeth?" asked the mistress.

"Not much, mum," answered the maid. "Mr. Snarry had in a twopenny brick last night, and Mr. Bodle borrowed it when he came home late, because the shops was shut."

"Mr. Bodle 's a vampire," affirmed Mrs. Chicksand forcibly.

"Lor! is he now, mum?" inquired Lisbeth. "I shouldn't wonder. He never paid back half the cottage that Mr. Snarry lent him, a Friday, when his household was all gone."

"We should all starve, for what we get from him, a screwy, pinchy—There 's the post man," added Mrs. Chicksand, at a tangent.

And, as Lisbeth went up stairs to answer the door, Mrs. Chicksand finished her review by noticing the contents of the safe, which was something between a large lantern and a birdcage, and hung in the back-kitchen, above high-beetle mark.

Mr. Snarry, who resided on the second floor, was a clerk in the Drawing Office at the Bank, and lived in Kennington Road for economy and exercise,—the latter being no small point with him, as in his proportions he inclined to the chubby. Taking advantage of the first-floor being vacant, he had determined to celebrate his natal day by giving a party to certain other clerks, and Mr. Bodle was invited to join them, for the triple reason that he sometimes gave Mr. Snarry concert-tickets, that he sang a good song whenever he was asked, and that the use of Mr. Bodle's back-parlour would be an imposing addition to the rooms already thrown open, whilst nobody would ever imagine that the imitation rosewood chiffonier was a turn-up bedstead. To commence the preparations for the festivity did Mrs. Chicksand descend to the kitchen, and with a willing heart; for a turkey had arrived from the country, where the house of Snarry located; and the gentleman himself—a real gentleman Mr. Snarry was—never locked up his things. In the will, this was a fine trait; in the deed,

it would have come to just the same whether he did or did not ; for, knowing the annoyance of forcing doors when keys were lost, Mrs. Chicksand had provided two for every lock in the house, as well as caused holes to be chiseled in all the cupboards and what-nots, to impugn the honesty of the mice, upon emergencies, with some little show of plausibility.

“ Two notes for Mr. Bodle, wrote all over with ‘ Gone away,’ and ‘ Try No. 2,’ and one for you, mum,” said Lisbeth, entering.

“ That man must have changed his lodgings very often,” mused Mrs. Chicksand. “ I can’t understand it.”

“ Mr. Snarry says he’s in love, and follers the young lady about like anything ; and that that’s her next door as sings through the wall,” observed Lisbeth.

“ Never mind what Mr. Snarry says ; wash up the breakfast things,” interrupted her mistress, breaking open her letter, and continuing, as she first read the signature, of course.

“ Well, if it is n’t from the Scattergoods at Bolong, that lived by us when Mr. Chick-

sand was unfortunate as a grocer in Essex ! I wonder what they can possibly want with me !”

The wonder was soon dispelled by simply reading the epistle, in which Mrs. Scattergood wished to know if Mrs. Chicksand could accommodate her husband, son, and daughter, on their arrival from Boulogne, until they had time to look about them.

“Dear me !” observed the lady, as she twisted the letter various ways. “They’ve put where they live at Bolong, but no date, and they say they shall leave ‘to-morrow.’ I wonder when that is.”

“Thursday, mum,” said the servant.

“Ish ! nonsense ! you don’t know what I mean,” replied Mrs. Chicksand. “What can we do ? They were nice people, the Scattergoods were, but lived over their means. Where can we put them ?”

However, Mrs. Chicksand soon contrived the accommodation. The back-kitchen was to be fitted up as an extempore sleeping apartment for her husband and herself ; and Lisbeth was

to repose in some of those mysterious *penetralia* wherein lodging-house servants usually sleep ; portions of the dwelling whose precise situation has never been correctly ascertained, and in all probability never will be ; the popular opinion being divided between the binns of the empty cellars, or the unoccupied shelves of the pantry.

“ If they come to-day, Mr. Snarry must put off his party,” observed the servant, as she hung the cups on tenter-hooks. “ Won’t he be wild, too, that’s all, after giving three-and-sixpence, as ever was, for two pound of spermycitties for the room. My ! ”

“ Well, we must take the chances, Lisbeth,” said Mrs. Chicksand ; “ if they must come, they must.”

And then the mistress of the house proceeded to give directions, and make arrangements for the festivities of the evening.

## CHAPTER IV.

## MR. SNARRY'S MAIDEN ENTERTAINMENT.

WHEN a bachelor gives a party to his male friends, he has only to provide interminable boxes of cigars, consecutive kettles of hot water, and ordinary bottles of distilled drinks, to amuse his guests in a first-rate manner ; and with a card-table borrowed from the man in chambers underneath, a barrel of oysters, and one spoon between three, the *réunion* is safe to go off admirably. But when he expects lady visitors, it is an undertaking of much greater importance ; their more delicate organization requiring equally refined appointments, from a looking-glass and pincushion in the back-parlour unrobing room, upon their arrival, to the female attendant, who must not go to bed until all the bonnets have been properly distributed,

upon their departure. And to young ladies there is a wild recklessness in coming to a single man's house, that often leads them to look for some extra-ordinary amusement; and this excitement reacting upon itself, requires all the energies of the host to prevent the extreme of expectation running into the depth of disappointment.

Mr. Snarry was aware of this. He had rashly begged his Benedict fellow-clerks to bring their wives, and eke their sisters, that the Bank might resound with his praises, as one of its most dashing constituents; and telling them that they must take everything in the rough, he directly commenced toiling to render the entertainment *recherché* beyond imagination. For this did he buy for eight-pence two bronzed casts from a child of sunny Genoa, of ladies holding sockets in one hand, and resting wheels without spokes upon their legs with the other; and in these sockets were implanted wax-ends, albeit they cracked in the operation. For this did he trim the lamp, whose name of "solar" suggested to classic

minds the "*lucus a non lucendo*" beyond anything else, and only resembled the sun in its eclipse and total disappearance, as night advanced; for this did he dispossess the staircase bracket of the unknown bust, and place the light thereon. For this did he paralyze, with an unwonted order, the pastrycook at the corner of the street, who had hitherto regarded patties and blanc-mange as flighty conceptions of romantic confectioners; and on this account alone did he hire a six-octave square piano, at half-a-guinea, that Mr. Bodle might thereat shake his locks, and conjure with the keys, producing the gay quadrille from its freshly-attuned interior.

The governors of the Bank of England, although in ordinary cases men of keen perception and cool judgment, were that day convinced that Mr. Snarry had the influenza: for he left early, under plea of being indisposed, (which in reality he was—to stay any longer,) and devoted the afternoon to rehearsing his properties and effects at home. His friend, Mr. Bam, who perplexed palpabilities whenever he



got them, at Clement's Inn, where the nutritive potato sent up its steam of incense to the mighty pillars; the grand entrance that conducted to the modest chambers, like the imposing outside of a juggling show, attracting crowds to be deceived within; Mr. Bam—whose bill in youth's young morning he had once put his name to—had lent him his boy to wait; and relieve Lisbeth of her manifold duties. So that altogether Mr. Snarry calculated upon an effect; as well as making immature clerks believe that he inhabited many rooms, and kept a plurality of attendants.

Mr. Chicksand returned at five, and at the request of his partner bought a pair of white Berlin gloves; not to join the company, but to look like a butler, that he might receive one or two shillings when the guests departed, which Mrs. Chicksand affirmed there was no occasion to throw away upon the dab-boy. And at a quarter-past seven the Clapham omnibus put down the first guest, Mr. Pratt, who trod on a slide, and tumbled down as he got off the step, thereby breaking his brace, which

Mr. Bodle kindly mended with a piece of harp-string; and they were thus engaged when the "second party" arrived, which included two or three of the fair sex, followed by a very ancient clerk indeed—a senior one, at a hundred a-year, in pumps, spectacles, and gloves, so long that they doubled over the ends of his fingers. And then all the ladies sat in a row on one side of the fire-place, and all the gentlemen stood about on the other, not speaking much, and only in a whisper; to divert which solemnity, and give an appearance of bustle and vivacity to the proceedings until it was time to have up the tea, Mr. Snarry poked the fire, ran in and out of the room upon imaginary missions, and opened and shut drawers and chiffoniers, nervously looking after things which he knew were not there, for very distraction.

When the tea arrived, Mrs. Hankins, the wife of one of the company, was requested to superintend its distribution, which gave rise to many pleasant sallies of utterance of sly things; Mr. Bam sitting upon Mrs. Hankins's

left, and putting the sugar into the cups with infinite drollery. Mr. Pratt, too, came out of the corner where he had remained ever since he came into the room, and practically proved what had been often told him at the Bank, upon the mere perception of his companions, that he was an advantageous acquisition to hand the muffins about at a limited tea-party.

“That’s right,” said Mr. Snarry, rubbing his hands, and infusing a little lively dreariness into the party; “that’s right, ladies; this is Liberty Hall, you know. Don’t mind Pratt; he’s quite harmless.”

Mr. Pratt blushed, and the ladies tittered slightly, whilst the ancient clerk looked pleasant over his spectacles, and paid great attention to what everybody said, often leading the company to think he was about making a bright remark, and then disappointing them by saying nothing. In the midst of one of these pauses the iron gate at the end of the garden was heard to slam, and then a human imitation of a mail-cart horn was sounded from below, followed by one enormous solitary bang of the knocker.

“There’s Jollit, for a guinea!” cried Mr. Snarry. “Come, now we shall do. I hope he will be rich to-night.”

The wish, whatever it meant, was certainly a kind one, and uttered in all sincerity. For Mr. Joseph Jollit was the wag of the Drawing Office, the “funny man” of every party he was asked to, and unequalled either in his graphic lyrical descriptions, or sawing off the leg of the rosewood-chair.

Mr. Jollit first caused himself to be announced by Mr. Bam’s footboy as the Duke of Northumberland, and then in a most diverting manner, walked on up stairs to the second-floor; from whence, being recalled, he opened the door a little way, and putting his cloak and hat on the top of his umbrella, after the manner of the practical joke in the story-books, touching the African who deceived the lion into going over a precipice, he hoisted it up behind; concluding that funny trick by pitching it clean over the door amongst the guests, which drew a slight cry of terror from some of the ladies, who imagined that this





was Mr. Jollit's usual method of entering a drawing-room, he being a species of clown of private life. When the excitement of his real entrance had somewhat subsided, he got behind Mr. Bodle, and having pinched him in the calf, yelled like a dog, at which Mr. Bodle got exceedingly indignant; until Mr. Joe Jollit gave him a dig in the ribs with his thumb, put his tongue in his cheek, and told him it was all right.

A round game was now proposed; and as soon as Lisbeth had removed the tea-things, and with the subterraneous assistance of Mrs. Chicksand, washed the spoons against supper, Mr. Snarry got out the cards and counters, the latter of which were a gross of button-moulds on a string, and caused a little joyousness. And this was increased for the time into something really like a laugh, when Mr. Joe Jollit turned one or two of them into teetotums, by cutting splinters of wood from underneath the table with his penknife, which he pushed through the hole in the middle, and set them twirling. They made a very

large party for *vingt-un*, the funny gentleman sitting between Mrs. Hankins and her sister, and saying "that he was a rose between two thorns,—he meant a thorn between two roses."

And then he dealt in eccentric fashions, and made jokes about the first knave, and hid aces under the candlestick ; and put other people's fish in his pocket, with other jocularities too numerous to mention. As the card-table drew off a great many people, Mr. Snarry was greatly comforted at all this display of talent, and felt less nervous about entertaining them. But he found, after all, that giving a party wss not the glorious treat which he had anticipated it to be.

When the game left off, at which, by some means or another, everybody had lost a shilling, the time came for Mr. Bodle to amuse the company by playing and singing whilst supper was laid. And this was all very well ; for the musical professor was becoming indignant, that he had not been asked before. After a convulsive symphony, he commenced a ballad of his own composing, singing it very loud,



that the young lady who lodged next door, whose migrations he followed with hopeless affection, might hear it; whilst the lady portion of the company listened with great admiration, and Mr. Joe Jollit imitated a violin-cello performer, by sitting the wrong way upon his chair, and playing upon the back with the tongs, at which Mrs. Hankins's sister hid her face in her handkerchief with laughter, he was such a droll creature—she never did!

Two or three ladies, with their hair dressed in the most prevalent style of suburban scarecrows, who had remained singularly unoccupied all the evening, were now led forward to supper by Mr. Pratt and the ancient clerk. Mr. Bodle played the “Roast Beef of Old England,” which was thought very appropriate; and Mr. Joe Jollit drew down great mirth, by giving estimates of the prices of everything on the table, asking Mr. Snarry what time to-morrow he intended to dine off the fragments, and drinking by mistake out of Mrs. Hankins's sister's glass. Then he called Bam's footboy “Lorenzo Augustus,” and christened Lisbeth

Clotilda, and told Mr. Snarry not to be fussy; for if there were not enough clean plates, they could turn what they had upside down. What a real blessing was Jollit to persons about to give a party !

After supper Mr. Snarry informed the guests that he had prevailed upon Mr. Joe Jollit to dance his hornpipe blindfolded amongst six oyster-patties, the fire-shovel, and hearth-brush, disposed in a cunning manner upon the floor. There only remained from the supper four patties and two cheese-cakes, which the talented gentleman was arranging to his satisfaction, when a great knock at the door diverted his attention.

“That’s my brother Tom,” said Mr. Jollit. “He said he would come late, because he has been to another party.”

“He will take some supper,” said Mr. Snarry.

“No, no,—never mind,” replied Jollit ; “he can have that pastry when I have finished with it. Now see me receive him.”

Lisbeth was re-collecting clean tumblers in

the kitchen, so Mr. Bam's footboy answered the knock. Mr. Jollit first walked round the room with pantomimic mystery; and, having taken up one of the squabs from the sofa, which he poised on the half-opened door, next armed himself with the other, and stood opposite to it.

There was a moment of breathless interest, as footsteps were heard on the stairs. They approached, and the door was opened by Mr. Bam's boy. The first cushion directly fell down upon his head, and, before an instant could elapse, Mr. Joe Jollit hurled the second with herculean power at the visitor who followed him. The gentleman reeled back, and appeared to stumble. There was the scream of a female in distress, followed by a smash of glass so tremendous, that it could be compared to nothing but a shower of tumblers falling through the roof of the Coliseum conservatory; and then Mr. Snarry, and as many of his friends as it could accommodate, rushed wildly out upon the landing-place.

Half way down the flight was a stout gentle-

man in a travelling-cap and cloak, grasping the balusters with one hand, and clutching a carpet-bag with the other, as he gazed in speechless astonishment at the throng above. At the bottom reposed the fatal cushion and Lisbeth, amidst the ruins of the tray of glasses she was carrying up for the mixed beverages. And close to her were two females, also in travelling costumes, the younger one a pale, but very handsome, girl of eighteen, clinging to the other in extreme terror; whilst a violent draft ascended from the open street-door, through which a little boy was assisting a hackney-coach driver to bring in all sorts of packages and bundles from the vehicle.

Mrs. Chicksand and her husband flew up from the kitchen, where they had been discussing every dish of Mr. Snarry's supper as it came down, upon the first alarm; and in an instant the truth broke upon them. After a terribly rough voyage of thirteen hours, the family of the Scattergoods had in reality arrived from Boulogne, and driven immediately to Mr. Chicksand's for something like a quiet

night's rest, to compensate them for their harassing journey. Mr. Bam's footboy, forewarned of nothing to the contrary, imagined that they were a portion of the company, and directly ushered them up stairs; and Mr. Joe Jollit's funny conceits had led to this remarkable reception.

There was, of course, a violent uproar, in which all the gentlemen joined, except the ancient clerk and Mr. Pratt, who retired in great fright to the end of the room. Some were very angry, others could not help looking upon it as a practical joke. But the young girl, who still kept close to her mother, after exclaiming, "How different this is to our own home!" burst into tears.

## CHAPTER V.

VINCENT SCATTERGOOD MEETS WITH AN ENGAGEMENT.

THE house from whose humblest attic issued forth those harrowing incidents of domestic tragedy and nautical adventure with which Mr. Glenalvon Fogg, dramatic author, startled the Monday night galleries, and appalled the pits of minor theatres, was situated in a blind court leading out of Drury Lane. You would not have found your way thither unless you had been shown, for the entrance was like the long private approach to an exclusive dust-bin, widening into a narrow parallelogram of rickety houses, so that the ground-plan of the locality would have put one in mind of the sectional outline of an eau-de-cologne bottle. There was a gutter in the middle, obstructed

into various lakes and waterfalls by the ingenuity of the resident children, to which the pavement on either side inclined ; and one lamp at the extreme end, which left a neutral ground of gloom before the next one in the street, opposite the entrance, caught up the illumination. Some of the houses were destitute of bells and knockers, and the doors remained open all night. Others had whole regiments of little knobs on the posts, one below the other, like the stops of a church-organ, with an array of small brass labels accompanying them, that resembled the show-plates put forth by enterprising trunkmakers, graven with the names of various individuals who are commonly supposed to have ordered large outfits of travelling-desks and portmantaus, which they never paid for.

Mr. Glenalvon Fogg had a bellpull. It was the inside of a window-curtain tassel screwed on to a skewer. But this was only for the service of visitors, as he furthermore possessed a key, which in its powers was more complicated than anything the most lock-perplexing

engineer ever invented, for nobody could use it but the owner, and sometimes he could not himself. It required to be inserted for a certain distance in a hole five times its size, with no scutcheon ; and then, whilst the top of the door was pulled towards him by the knocker, and the bottom kicked from him by the foot, a peculiar twist was made, and, provided the key was in a complaisant mood, the lock yielded. If these precautions were not taken, the key turned wildly round and round in its socket, producing no more effect than if it had been the door-handle of a night-cab. The whole ceremonial usually caused great distress to new lodgers ; but, the task once achieved and understood, they rejoiced greatly in their double security.

Followed by Vincent Scattergood as closely as the gloom permitted, Mr. Glenalvon Fogg entered his house, and groped his way up the creaking and disjointed staircase. When he had climbed as high as he could go, another door was opened ; and, after he had stumbled over the table of the room, and kicked a chair







John Leach

into the fire-place, he contrived to find a lucifer. Its lurid promethean glare, as he kindled it against the side of the mantelpiece, appeared to give him pleasure, as any sort of tinted fire was wont to do. He waved it about as he would have done a torch, and hummed a few severe melodramatic bars as he lighted the candle, with the air of the Genius of Envy invoking the Fiend of Mischief.

“This is my roof,” said Mr. Fogg blandly, as he lighted the small end in the candlestick, —one of the eighteen-penny brass ones come to distress, which, to judge from the displays in shop-windows, furnishing ironmongers think the chief thing necessary for young couples establishing. “This is my roof.”

Vincent looked towards the ceiling, and saw, from the sloping rafters, that he spoke literally.

“And this,” continued the dramatist, pointing to a turn-down bedstead, painted in the imitation street-door pattern; “and this my lowly couch. But let content invest it, and the sleep is sweeter than on the gilded pillow.”

(This was from his last play.) “I am sorry I have no similar accommodation to offer you, but you shall have the mattress.”

“I am afraid I am putting you to a great deal of inconvenience,” observed Vincent.

“By no means, my dear sir,” replied Mr. Fogg, as he began lugging off the mattress. “The sacking is sufficiently soft. With respect to blankets—with respect to blankets—um—I was thinking—”

“Oh, now don’t mind me,” said Vincent, who perceived that there was not a superfluity of the articles in question. “My coat has kept off a little more cold than this; and, so long as I get shelter, I am not very particular about my bed. I hope you don’t object to the smell of tobacco?”

“By no means,” returned the dramatist, as he made preparations for his night toilet. “A pipe on the stage is a good effect; it imparts an air of nature to the scene, especially if smoke comes from it. Heigho!” he continued, yawning, as some distant and apparently half-frozen bells wheezed out their chimes. “It is

very late, and I shall not be long going to sleep. I dreamt a plot last night—one of wonderful situation. I wonder if I shall do so again.”

“Try this first,” said Vincent, as he took a small flask from his pocket. “I don’t expect it has paid much duty, but possibly it will be none the worse for that.”

“Now, by my halidame!” exclaimed Mr. Fogg, tasting the contents; and then, descending to the everyday style, he added, “That is excellent—most admirable. Good night!”

Having thus expressed himself, he curled up in the bedclothes like a human dormouse, and was soon asleep, revelling in visions of sudden entrances, and unanticipated *dénouemens*. Vincent smoked his pipe as he sat over the hearth—more from habit than custom, for the fire had long since departed,—and then, throwing himself upon the mattress, he placed his bundle for a pillow, drew his rough coat closely about him, and soon slumbered as soundly as his host.

It was late in the morning when they awoke.

Vincent had a faint recollection of having opened his eyes about daybreak, and seen some aged female wandering about the room ; and now a fire was burning in the grate, and a cloth was laid for breakfast variegated at every part with inkspots. The visitor left Mr. Fogg to adorn, whilst he went down to a barber's, and refreshed himself with a shave and an ablution. In about a quarter of an hour he returned, and found his host ready for his meal, of which, however, there was no very great appearance beyond a coffee-pot on the hob.

“I saw some most attractive sausages just now,” said Vincent : “suppose we have a pound. I am not so very hard run but I think I can afford that trifle.”

There was a mute expression of satisfaction at the offer on the features of Mr. Fogg, and Vincent hurried away to make the purchase, soon returning with the luxury, as well as a pot of porter.

“There !” he exclaimed, with a mingled air of triumph and satisfaction as he placed them on the table ; “we shall do now !”

“ We must cook them,” observed the author, “ ourselves.”

“ Leave that to me,” said the other. “ I know all about it, provided you supply the means. Have you got a frying-pan ?”

“ I cannot say I have,” said Mr. Fogg ; “ but I have an old property, that will answer every end.”

And, going to a large box that was in the corner of the room, he routed amongst the rubbish with which it was apparently filled, and produced a battered theatrical shield, which had apparently been used before for the same purpose.

“ There !” he exclaimed, thumping it with his fist, in token of its soundness, “ that was part of a debt from a country manager. I sold him two three-act dramas, out and out, for fifteen shillings, and he could not pay me even that ; so I took it out in properties. It has stood a great many desperate combats.”

“ We ’ll see if it will stand fire equally well,” observed his guest.

Under Vincent’s culinary superintendence the

sausages, after hissing and sputtering on the shield, were transferred to a dish on the table ; and then he drew the chest towards the fire, and sat upon it, as they commenced eating, with an excellent appetite. The meal was pronounced excellent, the porter unequalled ; and by the time they had finished they began to feel as if they had been acquainted with each other as many years as they had hours.

“ And so you do not wish to go home again ? ” asked Fogg, in following up a conversation which Vincent started during breakfast respecting his own affairs.”

“ Well, I don't like to, to tell the truth : in fact, I scarcely know where my home is situated just at present. I'm afraid I have tired the governor out with my unsettled disposition ; although, to be sure, he never did much for me. He failed, as a lawyer, about a year ago, and then they all went to live at Boulogne. He had hundreds of chances, but let them all slip through his fingers.”

“ You did not go with them ? ”

“ No ; I went to sea,—the refuge of all the



ne'er-do-wells. And yet I think I could have got on if I had been regularly put to something. But whenever I spoke to my father about it, he said he would see, and it would be all in good time, and there was no occasion to hurry—you know the kind of character."

"Precisely," said Mr. Fogg; "more effective in the legitimate than a domestic burletta. Fathers should always be energetic in the latter."

"Eh?"

"Excuse me,—a passing idea," replied Mr. Fogg. And then he continued, speaking dramatically, "Go on; your story interests me: you spoke of friends—of home. You have a mother?"

"Yes; and a sister—a dear, good girl, who had more sense in her little finger than all the rest of the family put together. Poor Clara! I believe she was the only one at home who kept things at all together."

And Vincent remained silent for an instant; whilst Mr. Fogg poked the fire with a toasting-fork.

“Have you any plot laid out of what you mean to do?” asked the dramatist.

“Nothing in the world,” returned his visitor. “I couldn’t stand the sea any longer, and so I left it of my own accord. I must contrive something, though, or it will be getting interesting before long.”

“Can you write?”

“Of course I can,” replied Vincent, looking as if he were astonished at the question.

“Yes; but I mean, can you compose? — are you anything of an author?”

“Not that I know of.”

“When I first came to London, I was not much better off than yourself,” observed Mr. Fogg; “but I got an introduction to the press, and turned reporter of accidents. I lodged at a public-house next an hospital, and got them all first-hand from the porter’s assistant. I was paid, as usual, by the line.”

“And did that bring you in much?” asked Vincent.

“Well, I was obliged to nurse and humour the accounts a little, and say as much about

nothing as I could. I mean, I generally commenced by throwing the whole neighbourhood of the occurrence into a state of the greatest excitement throughout the afternoon, in consequence of a report that such and such a thing had happened. Now, you see, that in itself makes two or three lines ; although, in reality, the chances are that the very next door didn't know anything in the world about it, or if they did, didn't care."

"I can't tell whether I could manage that or not," said Vincent, "because I never tried. Still, I repeat, I must see about something or another."

"I think I could insure you nine shillings a-week, for a month or so," observed Mr. Fogg.

"Indeed !" cried Vincent eagerly ; "and how ?"

"By getting you into the pantomime at one of the theatres over the water, as a supernumerary. Should you object to that ?"

"I should not object to anything that brings me in one halfpenny," said the other.

"Well, I will see about that at once, then,"

continued the author. "I have to read a piece at the theatre this morning, and I will mention it to the chief of the supers. In the meantime, whilst I am gone, will you look over this manuscript, and see that there is nothing wrong in the nautical phrases."

"I will do so, to the best of my ability," said Vincent.

"And, by the way," said Mr. Fogg, as he took his cloak from the peg, and rubbed his hat with a blacking-brush, "if you think of any good incident in your own family or career, just jot it down, will you? It will all work in."

Vincent smiled as he promised compliance and betook himself to his new task, with the assistance of a pipe; whilst Mr. Fogg, wishing him good morning, and telling him to make himself at home, started forth upon his dramatic and philanthropic mission.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE MYSTERIES OF PANTOMIME.

THE stage-entrance of the transpontaine theatre, towards which Mr. Fogg now bent his steps, was guarded by a janitor of particularly severe aspect and demeanour. Next to beadles and toll-takers, there is no class of persons so capable of inspiring awe, or repressing exhibitions of what is commonly understood in well-conducted circles to signify merely the outer husks of corn, as stage-doorkeepers,—those antitheses to turnkeys, whose business it is to sit in a lodge, reversing the ordinary duty of a gaoler, and occasionally occupied in keeping creditors from going in, instead of debtors from coming out.

Scutt—the chorus and supernumeraries called

him Mr. Scutt—was a fine specimen of his class ; and he kept the hall of the theatre, whose fortunes Mr. Fogg was about to increase by his dramatic production. He had been in that situation for thirty years, and outlived half-a-dozen lessees. He had known the fairies rise to peasants, then to pages, and lastly to chamber-maids ; he recollected every year in which any piece had been performed, how long it ran, what time it took to get up, and who acted in it. And yet, with all this, it was very remarkable that he had never seen a play in his life, nor did he enjoy a very clear idea of what a dramatic representation was like ; being only conscious that the performers wore dresses different to what they walked about the streets in, from having seen some of them occasionally come down to speak to acquaintances inside the wicket.

Some people have a great desire to get behind the scenes of a theatre, and will invent the most artful schemes, and presume upon the faintest knowledge of anybody therein occupied, to accomplish their object. But Scutt would have

been a very unfortunate guardian to have "tried it on" upon. There was a force in his speech, and a roughness in his manner, that made the self-sufficient quail, and frightened the timid out of their wits, by the awful "Sir" or "Madam" with which he commenced his speeches. Indeed, to form a picture of him, exaggerated but characteristic, you must imagine Dr. Johnson, if he had taken to drinking, come to distress, and been provided by Garrick with the situation.

To Mr. Fogg, however, as an author of the establishment, he was most especially polite; and on this present morning they had a pint of "deviled ale" from the house near the theatre, in company. And, this being discussed, Mr. Fogg took his way to the green-room, invigorated in mind and warmed in body, to read his piece.

In compliance with the prompter's call of the previous evening, which had been locked up in a little cage, like a bank-note at a money-changer's, the performers were all assembled, sitting as gravely round the room as if they had

been acting Venetian senators; and not wishing to encourage the author too much, or make him think more of his position than he ought to do, as their underling, by laughing at his jokes or admiring his pathos. The stage-manager stirred the fire, and the call-boy brought a glass of water, and then Mr. Fogg began reading his play, which was in two acts, throwing all his exertion into the task of making every part appear desirable, and "bringing up" the bad ones. This took about an hour and a quarter, and then the meeting broke up, having condescended to pronounce the last situation "tremendous."

"Mr. Fogg,—one word, if you please," said an actor to the dramatist, as he left the room.

The person who addressed him was Mr. Dilk, the heavy-melodrama gentleman and general outlaw.

"You'll excuse me," said he, "but I think you may recollect our bargain."

"Indeed, I cannot call it to mind at present," said Mr. Fogg.

"I believe you promised to always give me a



leap or a fall," said Mr. Dilk. "Now there is neither in my part, as it stands."

"I don't see how we could bring one in very well," answered Mr. Fogg.

"Can I be shot, and hang to a beam by one leg, after the combat?" asked the actor. "I like an effect, you know—you understand me—an *effect*."

"I can't contrive it, I am afraid," replied the author.

"Then I don't think I can make much of the character," said Mr. Dilk. "Now, look here," he continued, after a minute's pause. "I never yet fell from the flies. Don't you think, if I was to appear suddenly, and confront the murderer through the roof of the cottage, instead of entering by the door, it would be a hit!"

There was a chance of Mr. Dilk's being discontented with his part, and it was a principal one. So Mr. Fogg agreed to interpolate the situation, albeit it had not much to do with the plot. But had Mr. Dilk wished to slide suddenly down a rope from the hole above the

chandelier to the stage, the chances are that he would have gained his point. As it was, he departed perfectly satisfied ; and then Miss Pelham, the leading heroine, attacked him.

“ I hope, sir,” said that lady, in a voice resembling a Meg Merrilies of private life, “ you will not allow Miss Horner to sing her song so immediately before my scene.”

“ There is no other situation for it, my dear lady,” replied Mr. Fogg.

“ Very well, sir,” said Miss Pelham ; “ then every point will be ruined. The comic part, too, is cruelly strong—enough to stifle everything. I am confident you will find it necessary to cut out all the jokes.”

Mr. Fogg could hear no more, but rushed in despair to the room of the stage-manager, being interrupted on his way thither by Miss Horner, who caught him by the arm, and exclaimed, most energetically,

“ Mr. Fogg, you are the author of the piece—recollect *that*—you are the author, and have a right to do as you please. Don’t consent to have one line of my part cut. You don’t know

the evil spirits there are in this theatre. There's a certain person—you understand—always will be the head. Jealousy, and nasty petty feeling ! Don't allow a line to be cut, or the part will not be worth playing."

Mr. Fogg uttered a groan in response, and took refuge with the stage-manager. Here, after an interview with the captain of the supernumeraries, he procured a weekly nine-shilling engagement for Vincent, and then started home again, receiving a promise that his play should be brought out in three days from that morning, which was declared quite a sufficient space of time to get up the most elaborate minor-theatre drama ever written, including scenes, dresses, incidental music, and lastly, being of least consequence, the words of the author.

Vincent had not been idle at his new task during his patron's absence ; and, the ideas of a dramatist respecting nautical subjects being somewhat opposed to what they are in reality, he found plenty to alter or improve upon. Mr. Fogg was greatly set at ease within himself by these corrections ; and, on the strength

of their day's prosperity, they dined together at an alamode beef house in the vicinity, and therein consumed unknown meats of richly-spiced flavour, inscrutable gravy, and india-rubber texture.

The pantomime being the last piece, Vincent was not required at the theatre until half-past nine, at which hour he wended his way thither, accompanied by his host. They passed the stage-door, where he was formally introduced to Scutt, that he might be known again; and then, diving into various obscure labyrinths, Mr. Fogg at last conducted him to the chief dressing-room of the "supers."

It was a rough, bare apartment, something like a kitchen without its appointments, and a prolonged dresser running all round it. There was a coke fire at one end, and over the mantel-piece two bits of broken looking-glass, and some burnt ends of corks, which far outrivalled the curious natural products of Macassar and Columbia in the rapidity with which they produced mustachios and whiskers. The dresser was covered with demoniacal properties, and

round the walls hung a series of heads, supernaturally large, as if they had just been decapitated from giants. But there was nothing ghastly in their appearance; on the contrary, the expression of their features invariably inclined to conviviality—so much so, that they appeared in the constant enjoyment of a perpetual joke. And when any of the supernumeraries, who were not men remarkable for hilarious countenances, put one of these heads on, you immediately invested him with the unceasing merriment it expressed, and gave him credit for great comic powers and extensive humour: although, from the circumstance of his being compelled to talk through the nostrils, his voice, when he spoke, somewhat disappointed you in its general effect, being anti-stentorian, and rather disproportioned to the head it issued from.

Vincent was introduced by Mr. Fogg to an “Evil Genius,” known to the rest as Poddy, and not appearing to rejoice in any other cognomination, who promised to shew the new member of the company his business. Poddy

was the butt of the dressing-room. He had been a "super" all his life, never having arrived even at the dignity of delivering a message, nor indeed opening his mouth at all upon the stage, except when he cheered, as a "mob" in Julius Cæsar. He was remarkable for wearing everything much too large for him, especially helmets, which always came over his eyes. But his great practical knowledge made him generally useful, and he was never without an engagement at one or the other of the theatres. No one could carry an emblazoned banner so well as Poddy, so as never to shew the back of it, but always to keep it on the same plane to the audience, in whatever direction he might be going. And in pantomime he was equally great, and would change his dress a dozen times in the course of the evening. His personation of the simple-hearted shopkeeper who admits the clown into partnership, upon the bare strength of his obsequious bows and promissory advantages was, as a whole, perfect; and in the tumult of popular excitement, at the end of the scene in which the

characters are changed, he performed an unwary image-man, of unstedfast footing, in a manner which usually drew down a roar of applause ; more particularly when a flabby fish, hurled by an unseen assailant, levelled him with the ground, and his unknown busts of *papier maché* rolled silently and unbroken about the stage.

No one but Poddy could fall back so naturally into the "RASPBERRY JAM," which in pantomimes appears to be usually kept loose in a hamper ; no one could afterwards exhibit the injury his fashionable summer trowsers had sustained from the accident with such effect. And when, as the maimed member of the Legion, he limped from a box, labelled "Damaged fruit from Spain," and had his crutches kicked away from under him by the clown in a heartless and unprovoked manner, his physical capabilities for pantomimic victims were singularly apparent. He regretted that the slide formed by the application of the purloined butter to the ground was not more frequently introduced, maintaining that, however ancient

a joke was, people always laughed at it just the same ; and that, however slow a Christmas piece might be going, the forcible intrusion of a hat over the eyes of a policeman, or, indeed, any acknowledged authority, always recalled the complete satisfaction of the audience.

By the direction of this experienced gentleman, Vincent was thrust into a painted envelope, of the last supernatural fashion, with canvas and whalebone wings running from the heels to the wrists. A terrible head, with green tinsel cheeks, and red worsted hair, was then added ; and finally, as the pantomime was about to commence, he took his place with some others similarly attired, in a large contrivance which was to descend from the back of the stage upon an inclined plane, and then open ; being ostensibly drawn by two dragons, but in reality let down by two carpenters, with a third, who rode behind to turn the revolving star, and light the red fire the minute the adamantine portals in front flew open. At length the piece began, and when the gong gave the signal, the



apparatus started off, Vincent keeping his feet tolerably well, from his nautical practice, although the progress was somewhat vague, and to common minds alarming ; much resembling the unsteady and awe-inspiring journey which is made down a steep beach in a bathing-machine let down from above high-water-mark by a windlass ; at which period the ignorance of where you are going, and the knowledge of the approaching immersion, usually combine to produce a state of feeling far from agreeable, the pulsation of your own heart being alone equalled by the bumping of the pinless cushion against the wooden walls of the vehicular tenement.

In this his first scene, in which the chief action was to express obedience, by assuming the position of the fighting gladiator, looking upon the ground after something he had lost, Vincent acquitted himself remarkably well ; so much so, that he was complimented by Poddy thereon when he returned to the dressing-room ; in return for which he stood some gin-and-water, and they drank it whilst they changed

their costumes to those of different every-day characters allotted to them.

“Pork, eel, mutton, or mince,” said a female voice, calling attention to itself by a previous knock at the door.

“Let me recommend you a pie,” said Poddy to Vincent. “It is the nourishingest thing going for a penny ; a great card to supers.”

Vincent declined the refreshment thus spoken so highly of.

“I’ll have half a pork tart with any one who’ll toss with me for it,” cried a Fiend of Despair. “Now, Poddy, you are always game. Sudden death—cry to me.”

“Woman !” ejaculated Poddy.

“It’s a man !” returned the spirit, with fiendish triumph, as he took off his head, in anticipation of the repast, never allowing his adversary to see which side the money turned up. “You may get two, if you like.”

“Poor Poddy is very unlucky ; he always loses,” remarked another demon, in tones of commiseration.

This was followed by a general laugh, im-

plying a hidden joke, and possibly a reflection on Poddy's sagacity ; who, however, shared the confectionary with his supernatural opponent, and then finished his toilet as the foreign gentleman in tights, with an eye-glass, who was to have his coat torn off by rival omnibus cads, and the discovery made that he had no shirt on. Several of the other supernumeraries dressed as visitors to an exhibition, including Vincent, who retained his half-nautical attire ; others prepared to keep toy and pickle-shops, in frock-coats, and long hair,—the prevalent style of pantomimic tradesmen who have to rush in frantic surprise from their houses, after the clown has knocked violently at the door, and laid himself down in front of it, or the harlequin has leapt through the large jar of "CAPERS" in the window, the label whereof directly flaps down and changes to "PICKLED;" and then they went up to the green-room, which was far above them ; for, as the opening scene was that remarkable portion of the globe, "the centre of the earth," in which the demons had to figure, the management had ably kept

up the delusion, by placing them as near that locality as the resources of the theatre would permit.

The green-room presented many tokens of that heterogeneous confusion which may be imagined to exist behind the scenes of a theatre during the performance of a bustling pantomime. All sorts of curious "properties"—fairies' wands, wicker shapes, and monstrous heads—were lying about, brought thither by the call-boy to be in readiness. Several of the characters also were sitting round, awaiting the moment of their appearance, the chief part being the lady visitors to the aforementioned exhibition, and promenaders, who were elegantly attired in scanty cloaks and cardinals of pink glazed calico, trimmed with white rabbit-skin dotted black, which had a fashionable effect. And every now and then the harlequin or clown rushed in, panting and exhausted, and leaned their heads upon the mantelpiece for support, whilst torn to pieces by a hacking cough, or refreshed themselves from a jug of barley-water, common to the chief pantomimists,

placed on a shelf in the corner of the room ; but before they had recovered, they were always called off again. The harlequin had to take fresh leaps whether he had breath or not : and the clown's duty was to throw the house into convulsions by a moral lyric, descriptive of an unprovoked assault committed by several ill-conducted lads upon an ancient woman of diminutive stature, who supported herself by retailing apples, but was slightly addicted to an unmentioned liquor, only to be guessed at by its rhyme to the last verse, unless supplied by any youth of quick perception in the gallery.

At the end of the room were two little children, mere infants, asleep ; one a fair-haired thing of four years old, and the other somewhat its senior. They had been tied to a floating cloud as fairies in the opening scene, and now were not again wanted until the conclusion. Their little legs had trotted backwards and forwards a long distance during the day to and from the theatre ; and their night's work only commenced when the night was al-

ready advanced. They were paid sixpence an evening for their attendance; and the weekly three shillings doled from the treasury was a sum not to be despised. But the effects of this artificial existence were painfully visible; for their lips were parched and fevered, their cheeks hollow and pale, even in spite of the daub of vermilion hastily applied by the dresser, and their limbs shrunk and wasted. To the audience, however, they were smiling elves, who appropriately peopled the "Realms of Joy," to the centre of which blissful region their presence was confined; and, so long as this end was answered, little else was cared for.

In front of the curtain, amongst the audience, there were many other children, to whose amusement these little martyrs ministered. They were not asleep, nor were they even tired—not they; for every means that could be devised to lessen the fatigue attendant upon this one instance of prolonged "going to bed" had been carefully put into practice. And when Vincent appeared again upon the stage, he could see their merry smiling faces through

the glare of the foot-lights that blazed and smoked between them, and, albeit not over-addicted to quiet reflection, could not help comparing their real elfin mirth with the forced smiles of the fictitious spirits he had just quitted. And most beautiful to all, although all knew not at the moment from what agency their own sudden exhilaration sprang, was their sunny and unalloyed laughter, which rang in joyous peals from one box to another, clear and musical above the coarser shouts of merriment that greeted any unforeseen comicality.

There are few more pleasant things in life, in this matter-of-fact conventional world of ours, than taking a child for the first time to a pantomime ; there is nothing that re-opens the spring of old feelings and recollections with such a burst of gladness, however closed up and encrusted over the well may be, by rust accumulated from the damp of disappointment, and the chill of worldly buffeting and unrealized hope. Their mirth is truly glorious : glorious from its purity and reality ; glorious from its inspiring effects upon our own hipped and tar-

nished spirits. And Heaven forbid there should be any whose withered sympathies are not refreshed by it ! for they must either be proof against all pleasant emotions, or never have known what a home was, when they numbered no more years than the joyous children around them.

The pantomime at last concluded. Men in dirty jackets and paper caps, who dispensed dazzling brilliancy which flickered in coloured lights upon the concluding *tableau*, ignited trays of prismatic fires behind the side-scenes ; the little fairies were aroused from their real visions of everyday life to the fictitious regions of enchantment. The curtain fell upon the magic realms of eternal bliss, which in ten minutes more were cold, dark, and unpeopled : the clown put his head under the drop-scene, and wished the audience "good night," to provoke a parting laugh ; and then Vincent rejoined Mr. Fogg, who had haunted the theatre throughout the evening, and was now waiting for him, talking to Scutt in the hall, in the full importance of being inside the exclusive



wicket, whilst many friends and relations of the demons and sprites were in attendance without.

“Well, how do you like your new engagement?” said the author to his new friend as they proceeded homewards.

“Oh, very well,” returned Vincent unconcernedly; “it will do until I get tired of it, and then I must find something else. I never kept to anything above a few months.”

“Let me recommend you,” continued Mr. Fogg, “not to fall in love. Green-room attachments usually end in poverty and quarrelling.”

“I do not think that there is much fear of that, from what I have seen to-night,” answered Vincent.

“You cannot tell. When I married the late Mrs. Fogg’s family—”

“Who?” interrupted Vincent.

“My wife’s family—two sisters and three brothers, unemployed: I married them all one hapless morning. When I did this, I thought I made a prudent step. But I was mistaken.”

“In what manner?”

“Because professional people should never marry one another. At that time I performed, instead of wrote; my late wife was also an actress; and so the properties, effects, and situations of our own domestic drama never went well, for neither of us had time to look to them.”

“But you could both earn money at your profession.”

“When we both got engagements. It was acknowledged that I bore my wife down a rocky pass better than anybody else; but then every play had not a rocky pass in it, and so the time I spent in carrying her up and down the top flight of stairs at our lodgings, for practice, was thrown away. And, you see, being such a clever actress, when we were not engaged, the realities of life came but strangely.”

Mr. Fogg became evidently affected by recollections, and for a time they walked on in silence; but the toll of Waterloo Bridge recalled him to the present, and when he got on

to that structure he stopped suddenly, and observed to Vincent,

“There has never been done with this bridge what there might have been.”

“So I have often heard my father say,” returned the other ; “he was a shareholder.”

“I mean in a dramatic, rather than a speculative point of view,” said Mr. Fogg. “What a flat that shot-tower would make, painted in neutral tint, the windows transparent, and lighted up with a regulation ten-inch moon behind it ! Then a ‘set’ of the roofs and chimney-pots before it ; and in front of all, the balustrades, built ! It would save any last act that was ever written.”

“I think it would be very effective, little as I know about theatricals,” said Vincent, gently drawing Mr. Fogg onward, for it was very cold. “After all, the principal rule for success appears to me to consist in shewing people what they know something about.”

“You are right,” said Mr. Fogg ; “I find it so in the drama. Tell them pleasantly what

they are already acquainted with, and they will applaud ; and say it is what they knew, but never thought about. Confound them with deep reasoning, which they do not altogether see, and they will call you dull. You must try and write yourself."

Vincent expressed his readiness to attempt anything that would tend to fill his almost exhausted purse ; and then the conversation went off into several ramifications, which lasted until they arrived at Mr. Fogg's abode, where he again took up his residence.

## CHAPTER VII.

## MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOL.

It was some little time before the confusion excited by the last ebullition of Mr. Joe Jollit's humorous idiosyncrasy had subsided; and when it did, it was very evident that the festivities of Mr. Snarry's *réunion* had received a check which could not be very easily got rid of. For the host himself looked with ghastly dismay towards replacing the fractured glasses and decanters; Lisbeth was too much flurried by the unexpected and unprovoked assault to which she had been subjected, to care any longer in what manner the wants of the guests were administered to; and the voices of the Chicksands were heard in fearful anger, betokening a stormy morrow for the hapless Snarry. Mr. Joe Jollit, too, was completely

crestfallen,—“funny men” are soon abashed when any awkward *contretemps* arises,—and slunk off somewhat secretly, after making a vague offer to the host to pay for what he had broken ; and then the rest of the company went away one by one, each thanking Mr. Snarry, as they departed, for the very delightful evening they had spent. Mr. Chicksand shewed them all out of the street-door, in his white Berlin gloves, and received the parting shillings, in his capacity of imaginary butler, which somewhat consoled him ; except that the illusion was carried a little too far in the case of Mr. Bam, who despatched him, in a very off-hand manner, some distance up the road, to get a cab for Mrs. Hankins and her sister ; and never gave him anything after all.

In the mean time the new-comers had been ushered into the parlour, the only room in the house at present unoccupied. Little conversation passed between them, except a few expressions of discomfort, for they appeared worn out, and jaded with the voyage. The young girl sat close to her mother, on a low cushion

by her side, and the gentleman, without dispossessing himself of his travelling-costume, marched impatiently up and down the room; whilst the youth was already asleep in a large arm-chair, which had been an easy one before the springs were dislocated, and stuck up in various uncomfortable positions from the seat. But fatigue is a good anodyne, and he slept as soundly as he would have done in the most luxurious bed ever contrived.

At last everybody had gone, and then, with a thousand apologies, Mrs. Chicksand ushered her new tenants into the drawing-room, now lighted by a single candle, but still redolent of evening-party odours,—lamps which had been blown out, pachouli, white-wine vapours, and cut oranges. The arrangements for the night were soon made, Mr. Bodle having given up his bed to the young gentleman, and slept on the sofa himself; the demand being made upon the strength of his not having paid for his last fortnight of occupancy. And, in another half-hour, the halls of revelry were wrapt in silence, everybody being asleep but Mr. Snarry, who

kept awake for the purpose of holding a long argument with himself as to whether the evening had gone off well, or otherwise, hunting up every pleasant reminiscence he could command to cheat himself out of the conviction that the termination had been rather unfortunate.

The inmates of the house slept until a late hour the next morning, except Mr. Snarry, whose duties called him with heavy eyelids to Threadneedle Street, and Mr. Bodle, who expected a pupil. But at length they were collected at breakfast, and certainly appeared in a somewhat more cheerful aspect than they had done on the preceding evening; for the morning was clear, frosty, and exhilarating, the Chicksand Wallsend blazed and crackled in the grate, and a bright sunbeam shot into the apartment, as if to greet the party assembled with a pleasant welcome.

Mr. Scattergood, a stout, heavy-looking man, who did not appear capable of any particular emotion, was seated by the fire, apparently taking great interest in his son's proceedings, who was making some toast. His wife had



once been very handsome; traces of beauty still remained in her features, which, however, spoke deeply of trouble and long-continued trials; and even the very good-looking girl who was superintending the breakfast-table bore a thoughtful and half-sad expression upon her face, which ill accorded with her years. And this gave her the appearance of being somewhat older than she looked; for Clara Scattergood was not yet eighteen: and, without being absolutely beautiful, there was a sweetness and intelligence in her countenance which was sure to attract, when a higher style of female loveliness would have been passed unnoticed. She was a softened and feminine likeness of her brother Vincent, with whom we are already acquainted. Her eyes, like his, were large and dark, but more tranquil and confiding in their expression; and her black hair, which grew with the same luxuriance, fell in heavy rolling curls over her fair neck and shoulders, unconfined by tie or comb of any kind. She was now evidently trying to bear up against her own feelings, as she assumed a cheerful tone of

speaking. But she was pale, and her eyelids were red. She had evidently been weeping during the night.

“I wonder when we shall hear from Vincent,” observed Clara, as she took her father his coffee. “I hope they will forward our letters that come to Boulogne, without loss of time. It is three months since we had any news of him.”

“It will all come in good time, my Clara,” said Mr. Scattergood. “I see no reason why he should not be quite well.”

“It seemed hard not to have him with us at Christmas,” continued Clara. “It was the first time we had ever been separated.”

“I am afraid we must make up our minds to many such separations, my love,” observed her mother, “until times are a little changed. Our first business will be to see about Frederick’s going to school. My brother has given him a presentation, and will pay his first year’s expenses. We should look to it without delay.”

The little boy, who was still before the fire, did not appear to enter into the urgency for any

hurry, as his face assumed a very lugubrious expression.

"Well, we will see about it next week," observed his father.

"Why not at once, papa?" inquired Clara. "He is perfectly ready to go this very day, if requisite. And perhaps uncle might be hurt at our not appearing to feel an interest in his handsome offer."

"I think I have too much to do at present to see about it," replied Mr. Scattergood.

"I am really too poorly," said the mother, and her appearance bore out the truth of her words, "or I would go myself to the master's where my brother has arranged for him to board. We should at present study everything by which our expenses may be diminished."

"I'm sure I eat very little," said Frederick, as he looked with an appealing expression in his mother's face. "I think we had better let papa settle it all."

The boy knew his father's disposition, and that a prolonged vacation would await his taking the affair in hand.

“I think I could go with him myself, if you have no objection,” continued Clara. “At all events, we could call on the gentleman he is to live with, and make some arrangements. I see nothing to hinder us from going there to-day.”

Mrs. Scattergood appeared to think with her daughter, and in spite of her husband's apathy concerning the undertaking, and Frederick's downcast looks, it was finally agreed that Clara should go with her brother that morning, and prepare the way for his entering the public school to which he had procured the presentation. She was not long, after breakfast, in getting ready for the journey; and then, with her young companion, they rode to London Bridge in an omnibus, and set off in quest of the establishment.

Thames Street is not exactly the thoroughfare which any one would select by choice for a promenade, unless they had qualified themselves to walk upon its very narrow pavement by a course of lessons upon the tight rope; and even then there are countless inconveniences to encounter. The unwieldy waggons appear to

take delight in threatening to crush timid pedestrians with their huge wheels; and the iron-bound posts join in the conspiracy, and lean obstinately back against the houses, until, in the despair from the perfect impracticability of passing between them and the wall, the hapless wanderer plunges madly into the mud and gutters, and pursues his onward course as he best may. Everything in Thames Street is identified with the locality. Its waggons are, apparently, never seen anywhere else, nor are the men of ponderous highlows and mighty whips who guide them; its very mud has a peculiarly commercial and wharfish look, preternaturally remaining in the same state of fluidity during the hottest summer; and if you met the same people who jostle you on the scanty footpath in any other part of the metropolis, you would stare at them as natural curiosities, evidently as much out of their place, as frogs in Regent Street.

In one of the many lanes which run up from Thames Street, between London and Southwark bridges, anybody who has the temerity

to venture into such obscure districts, may perceive a long dingy brick building, with little claims to architectural beauty, occupying a very large proportion of one side of the thoroughfare. It is adorned by six or seven gaunt, chapel-looking windows, with semicircular tops: and, on sultry summer afternoons, when their casements are thrown open, an academic hum disturbs the usual silence of the district, broken only at other times by the cries of men from one to the other, as ponderous woolsacks and packages slowly ascend from waggons to the top-stories of adjoining warehouses. But when they are closed, all around is severely silent, except at stated hours of the day, and then a rush of juvenile animation takes place from the old portal; and the lane instantaneously swarms with the jacketed and lay-down-collared youth of England, each with his complement of learning dangling by a strap from his hand, from the ponderous lexicon to the light *Exempla Minora*, to be used as a weapon of attack, or an auxiliary to study, as occasion may demand. The ancient statutes of the building provide

that one hundred boys shall be here taught at five shillings per quarter, fifty at half-a-crown per quarter, and a hundred, or upwards, for nothing. But as these rules were made in days of "wonderful sacrifice," when sheep were sold for fourpence each, and poultry for a penny, it was subsequently found necessary to alter them, and make everybody pay a respectable sum, in keeping with the importance of the academy. An inscription over the doorway of the building will tell the traveller that it is Merchant Tailors' School. We should more agreeably write "Taylors," in compliance with the taste of its supporters, who wish it distinctly to be understood that it has "no connection with any other establishment" either of cheap outfitters, or retailers of "Gent.'s Fashionable Wrappers," which thoughtless people might be apt to imagine, from its name.

Clara and Frederick went to the door as soon as they found out it was the place they were in search of. But there was no porter, nor bell to summon one with; neither did anybody appear, until an old woman emerged from

a kind of cupboard under the stairs; and from her they learnt that the Rev. Mr. Snap, with whom it was intended Frederick should board, lived some little distance from the school. She gave them some directions as to the nearest way to his abode, and then the brother and sister made the best of their way to his house.

The Reverend Mr. Snap was at home. He was an elderly man, very pompous and scholastic, whose very glance spoke of difficult Greek verbs, and wonderfully complicated numbers to be imperatively found out, where not even  $x$  was given as a clue. Abstruse paradigms and remote derivations were, so to speak, at the extremities of all his fingers; and the manner in which he worked out deep problems, of no use when they were discovered, of old women trying to determine how many eggs they had broken without counting them, and other artful puzzles, by playing at noughts and crosses, and multiplying  $a$  into  $b$  many times, was a wondrous thing to reflect upon. He received Clara and her brother in his study,



and, somewhat relaxed from his usual staid bearing, as he contemplated her intelligence and address.

“I have heard from your uncle respecting his intentions,” said the master. “He wishes to know if there is any chance of the ultimate election of your brother. How old are you, little boy?”

“Ten last May, sir,” replied Fred, who was sitting in great tremor on the very edge of a chair, close to his sister, making a bird’s nest of his pocket-handkerchief.

“Mamma wished him to be entered as soon as it could be done conveniently,” said Clara. “Our circumstances are somewhat changed, sir, to what they were; and every one at home is an additional expense, however trifling.

“He can enter immediately, if that will suit you,” answered Mr. Snap. “The Christmas vacation is just finished, and it will be as good a time for him as any other to commence.”

“Mamma would have come herself, sir, to have seen you,” remarked Clara; “but she is

very poorly, having only arrived yesterday from Boulogne ; and papa's occupations usually prevent him from interfering much in our family arrangements."

"So I have heard," answered Mr. Snap, in a tone which implied that he was somewhat acquainted with Mr. Scattergood's character. "But they have sent a very satisfactory representative." And Mr. Snap even smiled. "You may go home, and say that I shall be ready to receive your brother whenever he is ready to come."

If it had remained with Frederick, possibly his advent would not have taken place until a very remote period. As it was, he made his bow to the Reverend Mr. Snap with great alacrity, apparently very glad to quit his presence. And then, satisfied with the result of her mission, Clara took his hand, and they returned home, Freddy being encouraged to walk thither by the example of his sister, who led him to think it was not such a long way, after all, and scarcely worth getting into an omnibus for ; holding out a hope that he should

have the shilling thus saved to add to the contents of his money-box, when the particularly black day of the week came upon which he was to go, for the first time, to Merchant Taylors' School.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. CHICKSAND'S LODGERS.—THE ARRIVAL OF BLACK MONDAY.

IT did not take a very long time to prepare the youngest olive of the Scattergood family for his career at a public school. Clara was indefatigable, relieving her mother of all extra trouble in arranging his wardrobe, purchasing whatever was wanted, and, above all, cheering her brother, and keeping up his spirits by holding forth bright pictures of his approaching change. For Freddy, after the manner of most little boys similarly situated, did not appear to enter fully into the advantages of his position, but was somewhat discontented thereat. In fact, Mrs. Chicksand, who had an eye that penetrated the breasts of her lodgers, as well as their closets and tea-caddies, remarked, that

on the following morning he must have left his couch upon the opposite side to that normally appropriated to such a proceeding ; which insinuation, meant to convey an allegorical idea of sulks, might be considered as much owing to Lisbeth as himself, inasmuch as he slept in a French bed, which the handmaiden pushed close up to the walls, leaving no choice of sides but the one pronounced the wrong one.

Mr. Scattergood also exerted himself. He took great pains in undertaking to accomplish everything that was of no use when done, and went out-of-the-way distances, as his inclination led him, to procure articles that were not wanted ; and, finally, he insisted upon marking all the new linen of his son in an elaborate and minutely-correct manner, with some ink of his own manufacturing, which took one day to make, and another to use, and washed out the first time, without leaving a trace behind. But then it saved the expense of a bottle at the chemist's : it was an indolent occupation that Mr. Scattergood rejoiced in ; and it looked as if he was taking a share in the family exertions.

Of course there was to be a cake. Whoever went to school without one? What balm was ever found equal to it for the home-sick yearnings of little boys? Clara undertook to make it herself, and, for that purpose, descended to the kitchen on the morning antecedent to Frederick's departure.

Mrs. Chicksand was there also, fully employed, apparently conducting a small private wash, manufacturing a meat-pie, and superintending an unknown preparation that was simmering on the fire, all at once. But these manifold occupations did not prevent her from talking incessantly to Clara, as was her wont with anybody who would listen to her; the most favourite topic being the domestic affairs of her establishment, and the characteristics of her tenants.

"We've had a bad winter of it," said Mrs. Chicksand, as she screwed the fire-place together, took a glance at the contents of the saucepan, and then shook out a lot of little wet frills and cuffs, and threw them lightly upon one another to await the iron; "a very

bad winter, indeed, Miss," she continued, wishing a reply to her remark.

"Very cold, indeed," answered Clara; "but I think that is all over."

And she looked towards the window in confirmation of her remark, where a smoky canary of irregular plumage was disporting in the sun-beam, and very industriously trying to extract nourishment from a knot of wire in his cage, in lieu of a bit of lump-sugar.

"I was n't complaining of the weather," said Mrs. Chicksand. "I meant it had been a bad time for my lodgings."

"I am sorry to hear that, Mrs. Chicksand," observed Clara. "Were the rooms empty, then?"

"Oh, my rooms are always full, thank goodness. Always," responded Mrs. Chicksand, with a firmness of asseveration calculated entirely to scare anybody from daring to think to the contrary, and intended to assure her tenants that they were there located as an especial favour, by a lucky chance that did not happen often, and one which they could not possibly appreciate sufficiently.

"I never knew them empty above a week," continued Mrs. Chicksand, as if she had been upon her oath before the Lord Mayor, or any other sitting magistrate. And then, finding no response to her affirmation, she went on :

"But the lodgers have all been the wrong sort—they did no good for the house—too much in the chop and poultry way. They harricoed all that was left the next day, or briled the legs for breakfast. Give me a joint : that's what I say."

"But it does not suit everybody to have joints always," said Clara, as she quietly continued her employment.

"There it is, Miss," answered Mrs. Chicksand ; "but, then, how are the housekeepers to live ? As I said to Mrs. Walton, next door, what a 'let' she made with them Pullens—five months, and they never had anything up twice."

"That was very fortunate for Mrs. Walton, of course," said Clara.

"Fortunate, indeed, Miss," replied the landlady ; "a heavenly blessing ! I never get



such catches. Our second floor's all very well; but Mr. Bodle's the stingiest person I ever knew. He has a rabbit for dinner, and eats it all; and then buys baked potatoes in the street, and brings them home for supper in his pocket."

"Perhaps Mr. Bodle likes them," said Clara mildly.

"He may, but I don't," said Mrs. Chicksand. "And then he won't dine when Mr. Snarry does, and the fire has to be kept in, on purpose to cook his minikins."

The fire appeared so accustomed to be kept in, and in remarkably small limits too, that this could scarcely be considered as an evil, upon reflection.

"I should be much obliged to you for a larger basin, Mrs. Chicksand," said Clara, wishing to turn the subject.

"Yes, Miss, certainly; but I must get it myself, for Lisbeth's at the top of the house. Oh, she's the artfullest hussy, she is. The time she takes making the beds in the front rooms, and never hears the door, you wouldn't credit: always gaping at the—"

The conclusion of the speech died away in the echoes of the back kitchen ; but the hostess returned almost immediately, inquiring,

“ What ’s Master Frederick expected to take with him, Miss ? ”

“ He must have a fork and spoon, I believe,” replied Clara, “ and half-a-dozen towels.”

“ Umph ! a pretty thing, indeed. To be left behind him, I presume,” said Mrs. Chicksand, with indignation. “ Suppose I made a rule for each of my floors to bring six pairs of boots and a coal-scoop, on the some terms,—why, I should get nobody.”

Clara thought it more than probable.

“ I never submitted to the imposition but once, when my Anna Maria went to a ceremony for young ladies at Balham Hill,” continued Mrs. Chicksand. “ Take my advice, Miss, and tell your mamma to send the perfect substitute for plate. *I* should.”

“ I am afraid that would not do,” said Clara.

“ Oh, it ’s a fine thing,” answered the landlady, “ better than Sheffield goods. You wear the silver away from them in a very short

time ; but you may rub the substitute for ever before you get the silver off that."

And Mrs. Chicksand attacked a small collar somewhat savagely with a flat-iron, to give weight to her opinions.

The last thing established was the great treasure of all schoolboys—the box ; not the black trunk, with the initials of the owner in brass nails on the top, together with the rusty heads of tacks left behind, when former directions had been torn away, for the clothes ; nor the hair-covered ark with the literary lining, dotted over with black barley-corns, for books and supplementaries ; but *the* box, *par excellence*—the plain deal cabinet, with the iron-bound corners, japanned lock, and plebeian key. And wonderful were its stores ; to pass over the mighty cake which half-filled it, and the pot of jam wedged down upon its new spongy bulk, like a watch-tower on a castle-keep, as things which would be there of course. There was an invalid accordion, with a few notes suffering from croup, a present from Mr. Bodle ; and two mystic conjuring tricks, where-

by a piece of whip-cord could be drawn through a friend's nose, and a bad sixpence made to appear as though it had melted into dross. The Lothairs and Grindoffs of departed theatres were also included, pasted upon cards of the Infant Orphan Asylum, and weak in the ankles; and there was a box of dominoes, a ball of string, a remarkable collection of seals taken from letters, stored in a tin box with a half-sovereign soldered on to the lid, and a three-bladed knife of the best cast-iron. And, lastly, there was a little red purse, also the product of Clara's industry, through the meshes of which pieces of new money glittered with gratifying brightness; not a great sum, to be sure, but as much as could be afforded, and a perfect fortune to Freddy, increased when his sister quietly added half-a-crown to the contents from her own small allowance, without saying a word to anybody.

At length the day arrived upon which the young pupil was to make his *début* at the public school. A large cab was brought to the door in the afternoon by Lisbeth, who rode

in it all the way from the stand, to her great gratification; and, when part of the luggage had been put inside, and part on the box, Mrs. Scattergood and the little fellow entered. Frederick was rather downcast. It was the first time he had ever been from home; and, in spite of all the received affirmations that the schoolboy's is the happiest scene of life, there are few trials which await us in after periods sharper than that parting,—in comparison with our ignorance of trouble, and inability to bear it, none. The promise of Clara that she would write to him the next day somewhat cheered him; more so than his father's assertion, that Easter would come before he could turn round, which he immediately and practically refuted. But he did not wish Mrs. Chicksand, who waited on the steps, to see that he had been crying; so, as the glass was pulled up, he nodded to her with a smiling face, and then to Clara, who was at the window. The sunshine was, however, very transient,—an April gleam followed by a shower. And then he remained quiet.

with his hand within his mother's, until they arrived at their destination, when he again mustered up a little expression of cheerfulness.

The house of the Reverend Mr. Snap was not calculated to enliven anybody whose feelings inclined to despondency. It was situated at the extreme end of a dreary court in the vicinity of the school — a *cul de sac* so narrow that the sun's rays never fell upon the melancholy blue flags that paved it, nor, indeed, anywhere else, except by reflection from the top windows of the opposite houses. It was approached by a gloomy archway, and guarded by an attenuated iron gate, that swung to with a dismal clang after anybody invaded its solemn precincts, echoing up the yard, and announcing the approach of the bold visitor. It held out too little promise even, to allure organs or broom-girls into its gloom; and if they had come, the chances are that the stern, cold faces carved on the key-stones over the doors would have frightened them away again. Nor did the boys venture inside the gate to play at pitch-farthing, or three holes; the sound of

their own voices frightened them in the dead repose. And so the chief excitement that could be calculated upon by the inhabitants with any certainty was the advent of the milk. A wet Good Friday at Hampstead would have been a scene of wild and delirious gaiety compared to the dejected aspect of College Court. Some secluded localities are spoken of as sleepy-looking places: but this had the stark, gloomy quietude of death.

Mrs. Scattergood and Fred alighted, and entered the house. There was a short interview with Mr. Snap in his study, in which he spoke much of the judicious selection made by the family in choosing so excellent a school for their son. And then, when the servant and the coachman had brought up the boxes, and deposited them in the passage in the best possible position they could select for everybody to tumble over them who passed either way, Mrs. Scattergood rose to take her leave. Mr. Snap accompanied her to the door, although Frederick would rather have gone with her alone, for he wished to tell her once more,

without Mr. Snap hearing it, to be sure and write to him, for fear she should forget to do so, as she had only been requested fifty times that morning to bear it in mind, and to come and see him soon ; and ask him home before long ; and not to touch his theatre, which was too large to bring with him, whilst he was away, but to leave everything just as he had seen it last ; and to give his love to Clara and his father, and be sure and tell Clara to write too. All these requests were made in the short journey from the study to the street-door, in a very hurried and tremulous little voice, and most urgently impressed upon Mrs. Scattergood's attention. The reverend gentleman condescended to open the door himself, finding that the servant, for whom he rang when his visitor was about to depart, did not pay any attention to the summons—a circumstance which often happens in many other establishments besides Mr. Snap's, where a moment's reflection would prove how impracticable it was, now that magic has left the earth, for the man who was cleaning knives in his



shirt-sleeves and canvas apron, in some secret excavation far below the level of high water in the area-butt, to appear as soon as he heard the bell,—a slave to the ring,—in the perfect costume of his class, spotless and trim as though he were kept for nothing else but the especial service of morning visitors.

Frederick was a long time saying good-bye to his mother. No one would have believed those two simple words could have been made to occupy so many seconds in their delivery. He held her hand as though he never wished to let it go from his grasp ; and it was not until she had kissed him again and again, and whispered to him to sustain his character of being a man before Mr. Snap, that he allowed her to depart. And even then he would have run after her when she was half-way down the court, to have repeated his farewell, had not Mr. Snap drawn him back, and closed the door. Mrs. Scattergood, who had not ventured to look back, heard its sound ; it would be difficult to tell which heart sank most at the noise of its shutting-to, the mother's or her boy's.

The four other boarders, who lived with Mr. Snap, were at afternoon-school, so Frederick was shown into the room appropriated to them, and there left to himself. It was a large, bare, dreary place, with only four moveables of any kind in it, by way of furniture ; and these were a long deal table, hacked all over with initials and names, two forms, and the fender. To make the room better adapted to the purposes of study, from the lack of external objects to distract the attention, the lower halves of the windows were painted white ; or rather they had been once, but now they were turning to a neutral dirt tint, relieved by various arabesques, stencilled with the finger-nail on their surface, according to the taste of the designer. This appeared usually to be in the vein of imaginative satire, and was principally directed against Mr. Snap, who was more than once delineated in outline as suffering death by hanging, in great bodily agony, and from a gallows fashioned after the one into whose noose Punch prevails upon the jocose turnkey to put his head, in the laudable desire of promoting knowledge by practical demonstration.

The little boy drew his box, which had been taken into the room, towards the fire-place, and sat down upon it. There was no poker to stir the fire into a little more cheerful aspect ; and so he contented himself with watching the cinders, as they formed burning caverns and precipices, suddenly tumbling into other forms, through all of which he saw the faces of his mother and sister in every direction. Then he thought how happy he should be if the door opened, and they came unexpectedly to see him, or Clara appeared out of the wall, like the fairy ladies who always befriended youngest sons. How odd it was that he never cared much about talking to her at home ! And now he would have given all the contents of his box to have seen her, if only for one minute ; nay, Mrs. Chicksand and Lisbeth would have been welcome visitors, although he had only left them two hours.

The time passed on, and nobody came near him. When the cinders failed to interest him, he walked to the window ; but the court looked so dreary, and the grim carved head

over the front-door, which was at right-angles with the window, so stern and unfeeling, that he took possession once more of his box. Then it began to get dark ; the shadow of the mantelpiece showed itself upon the ceiling ; and a man came and lighted a solitary gas-lamp before the door, which looked like a beacon in a desert. At last his spirits broke down, and he began to cry ; until finally, resting his cheek against the wainscot at the side of the fireplace, he went fast asleep, and dreamt he was at home.

According to the venerable woodcuts which form the frontispieces to Primers of the dark ages, the paths of learning run through teeming orchards, in which apples predominate ; and pleasant pastures agreeably diversified, and peopled by joyous hoop-trundlers and kite-flyers, in long hair and knee-breeches. If such be the case, what a pity it is that thorns and brambles are allowed, apparently by design, to be planted on every portion of the road, causing so much inquietude to the young traveller, and making him look back upon his journey, when achieved,

with anything but pleasurable recollections, or gratitude for the opportunity of accomplishing it.

But possibly all this is right and proper, or it would long ago have been altered. At all events, the change would be last grafted on those ancient and time-honoured foundations, where the spirits of the gentle are crushed and broken, or hardened in self-defence, by the overbearing tyranny of those who should be their associates ; where the worst dispositions of the bully and school despot are ministered unto and fostered by licensed opportunities ; where every sacred feeling of home and affection is jeered at and despised ; and the acquirement of one or two defunct, and comparatively useless tongues,—and these alone,—so ill befits the pupil for his future social career, and almost brings him to envy his fellow charity scholars in eleemosynary garb, the education they pick up from their own institution in the adjoining church alley.

## CHAPTER IX.

MR. GLENALVON FOGG'S DRAMA IS REHEARSED.

“BEHOLD, how brightly breaks the morning!” exclaimed Mr. Fogg, dramatic author, as he drew back the curtain of faded moreen that hung across the window, and allowed the sun’s rays to fall upon a spirited portrait of the only representative of the British seaman, as he appeared when he apostrophized his dear eyes, and made six land-sharks belay who were insulting an unprotected woman.

“Finer than I expected from the fog on the river as I crossed the bridge last night,” answered Vincent. “I wonder how the sun can find his way into this place, amongst all those chimney-pots.”

“The sun that would not shine as brightly

into the humble roof of the industrious artisan as into the gilded halls of the monarch, is unworthy the name of a man, and—no, I don't mean that. How have you passed the night?" inquired the author.

"Oh, very well, I believe," said Vincent unconcernedly, as a matter of course.

"So have I," continued Mr. Fogg. "I had a vision that I was dwelling in marble halls."

"You must have found them very cold at this time of the year," replied his companion.

Mr. Fogg deigned not to reply to this remark, but proceeded to despatch his breakfast; which he did with the customary appetite attendant upon genius.

The "run" of the pantomime had finished, and, in consequence, the engagement of Vincent as a supernumerary had come to a termination with it; but he still remained with his patron, for Mr. Fogg found him of great service. His knowledge of nautical affairs suggested to the author many startling situations for ends of acts; he also enabled Mr. Fogg to bring them about properly; and as the small sum he had

brought to town with him, together with part of his salary, was not quite exhausted, he did not put his host to any extra expense for maintenance. Besides, Mr. Fogg had shadowed forth dim probabilities of procuring him other employment, in a literary point of view, before many more days had passed.

Mr. Fogg, by virtue of his calling, was ever on the hunt for character, and he studied Vincent's closely; but it was too unsettled to turn to any dramatic account. Young Scattergood seldom spoke of his family, scarcely ever of his wish to know where they were located, or to see them; and this betrayed something of a heartless disposition. Yet, occasionally, touches of a better nature would gleam forth, which were evidences of many good points in his temper of mind, warped, perhaps, and blunted by the manner in which he had been brought up. He was generous, certainly. He did not appear anxious at any time to annoy others, or give pain; and in many instances he had exhibited a nice sense of honour. And yet, with all this his idle recklessness and careless apathy



as to what he was doing, or what became of him, so long as he just supported himself, was likely, favoured by circumstances, to lead him into evils far greater than would have been likely to accrue from a negative condition of his honour or good feeling.

It was the morn of an important day, big with the destinies of Glenalvon Fogg. The production of his drama had been delayed some little time beyond his expectations, in consequence of the performances continuing to prove sufficiently attractive without being changed: but now the treasury of the theatre gave forth an account each night less than the preceding one, and "continued novelty" was decided upon by the management. And so the last rehearsal was called, and the first representation announced for that evening.

It was a marvellous production, this new drama of Mr. Fogg's. The heroine, who had a good part, called it "a stupendous piece." The supernumeraries, possibly looking only to the manner in which its wonderful action and situations perfectly obliterated all the cerebral

functions of conjecture, simply christened it "a stunner."

The drama was called "The Lee Shore of Life ; or, the Main Truck of Happiness ;" and was pronounced very effective, and "safe to go." The plot could not be very easily explained. In fact, it was modelled upon the same school as the railway to the antipodes formerly projected, which, to obviate the discomfort of the passengers coming out feet foremost at the other side of the world, was to hurry them so that they were not to have the slightest idea whether they were upon their heads or their heels. So, in the present case, intense interest, and appalling situations, followed each other with such rapidity, that nobody had time to inquire what they were about, or what end they were to answer ; which construction the experience of the present day proves to be an excellent plan to go upon, either in dramatic or general literature.

Amongst the characters of the piece, the father, Michael Cottage, "a reduced haymaker, and one of Nature's aristocracy," had

several beautiful passages to deliver ; especially where he called his employer “ the proud lord, who trampled on that soil which the English peasant loved to cherish.” And when this proud lord endeavoured to undermine the affections of Rose Cottage, who was too virtuous to go wrong in the slightest degree, being also in love with Tom Ratline, the nautical hero of the piece, the honest agricultural indignation of the father was absolutely terrific, as he spoke of “ the furrows on his cheeks, the harrow at his heart, the noble but profligate rake, ploughing up his bosom, and sowing the seeds of misery in a happy home, a contented, though an ‘umble one.” Then, by the vile contrivances of the proud lord, the true lover had to go to sea, and at the close the act informed the audience “ that blue-peter was flying at the fore,” and was pushed off in a boat upon wheels, waving his hat, and hoping that some friendly ball might lay him low.

In the second act, Tom Ratline was stated by the bills of the day to be “ on the blue waters ” somewhere a great way off, whereby,

as none of the audience knew anything about the manners and customs of the localities, more freedom was given to the fancies of the dramatist. And here he fought natives, and captured buccaneers, and took pirates' strongholds without end ; at the same time shivering his timbers so very often that it was a marvel anything beyond splinters of them, wherever they were, ultimately remained.

In the third act, he returned home with a large purse and a small bundle ; and providentially arrived the identical night upon which the proud lord had paid a smuggler, Dark Somebody, to carry off Rose Cottage. This led to an awful combat between the smuggler and the sailor, ending in the death of the former, who let out the secret that Tom was heir to the proud lord's estate, having been stolen by him when an infant ; and then he saw unpleasant fiends, who came to bear him off to eternal torments. Rose, who remained constant, gave her hand where she could give her heart ; the proud lord left the neighbourhood in disgust ; and the piece concluded with

the reward of virtue, and the information publicly conveyed to the audience, "that although vice may flourish for a time, yet the true tar nails the union-jack to his figure-head, and clasps the lass that loves a sailor to his heart of oak."

There was, also, a comic cobbler in the piece, with his sweetheart, Peggy Buttercup, who got perpetually jealous. And a murder was introduced in the third act, where the interest was felt to flag; but this last affair was more an episode than part of the plot, except in the great risk which Tom ran of being taken up as the assassin.

Vincent accompanied Mr. Fogg to the theatre, as well from having nothing to do, as in the hope of procuring something. The call of the prompter, which summoned "all the ladies and gents" at half-past ten, had been attended to, and the members of the *corps* were standing about the stage in groups, shawled and coated, and all looking very cold. A table and chair were placed at one edge of the scene, together with a pen and ink, or rather mys-

terious articles used by the prompter, bearing a slight resemblance thereunto. The leader was shivering in the middle of the orchestra, exactly in his own light, which streamed in one long dusty ray from the back of the gallery over the sweepers, who were clearing away the orange-peel; and, violin in hand, was arranging what he termed the “meloses,”—the little bits of incidental music to come in when anything interesting took place. As the play was to be produced that night, of course none of the scenery was finished; so the stage was fitted up with half a drawing-room flat, and half a smuggler’s haunt, with a ship’s bulwark and cannons running across the front, and a grassy bank at the prompt entrance, which looked very like a portable bath in a green petticoat.

Mr. Potter, the stage-manager, was standing with his back to the foot-lamps, talking to everybody at once, now shouting up into the flies, now bawling down to the men under the stage, next rowing the leader, then directing the *tableaux*, and every spare moment hurry-

ing Mr. Traps, the property-man, who kept appearing with wonderful articles to be used in the piece, of every description, apparently made from old bandboxes painted over.

“Good morning, Mr. Fogg,” said Mr. Potter hurriedly, as the author entered; “we are trying that ‘set’ in the second act once more. Now then,” he continued, clapping his hands as a signal, “back to your places. Mr. Poddy, come lower down; they are all in a heap. Mr. Jones, more to the right,—a little more still—not so much—that will do. Recollect you are on the look-out for the schooner. Harris, Croby, F. Croby, and Smith, be ready with the shaking-sea behind the second entrance as soon as the scene opens. No, *no*, no! What the devil are you there for, Mr. Howard? You must not be discovered until the boarders enter. Now, Mr. Dilk, if you please. What’s the cue, Mr. Groove?”

“A rough night of it,” answered the prompter.

Mr. Dilk put his hands into the pocket of his wrapper, and leaning indolently against part

of the proscenium, exclaimed in a careless, hurried manner, with great *nonchalance*, and with an utter disregard of any stops or emphasis,

“She walks the waters like a blazing cloud. Ha! a flash! damnation! our bowsprit’s flying in the breeze! up with the black flag; run out the guns! Brandon, Maltravers, Wilson, to your posts, and fight like tigers! death or victory!”

“Report of a gun, I think, Mr. Groove, after ‘blazing cloud,’” observed Mr. Fogg.

“Quite right, sir,” returned the prompter, making a note of the occurrence, to be executed at night upon the fine sheep-skin ordnance, like a Brobdignagian tambourine, which hung over his box.

“Silence, ladies, if you please,” exclaimed Mr. Potter; “if you would only talk half as loud when you are wanted to, as you do now, it would be much better for everybody.”

“I beg your pardon,” said Vincent, speaking just as Mr. Dilk was going on again; “but is not the pirate supposed to be chased by another vessel?”



“Yes, sir,” answered Mr. Potter sternly, as much as to say, “What the devil have you to do with it?”

“Well, then; I don’t very well see how his bowsprit can be hurt by a gun from the schooner.”

“Where would it be, then, sir?” asked Mr. Potter, perfectly astonished at a supernumerary giving so cool an opinion. “I believe Mr. Fogg knows a *little* of nautical business; perhaps you can teach him still better. Pray, where would it be, I ask again?”

“Where you would most probably be wounded when you went into action,” answered Vincent, with a little sarcasm, at which “all the ladies and gents” tittered, and the prompter tried to mend his pen with a chisel, that was lying amongst some carpenter’s tools at his side.

“Mr. Scattergood is not far from the mark,” observed Mr. Fogg.

“What do you mean, sir?” said Mr. Potter, very angry; and, although surprised at the freedom of a super, was still more astonished

to hear such a person as an author speaking his mind in a theatre.

“ I did not allude to yourself, Mr. Potter,” replied Mr. Fogg, with humility. “ But, of course, the gun would not hit the prow ; be good enough to substitute stern for bowsprit, Mr. Dilk.”

“ Taffrail’s better,” remarked Vincent, shortly.

“ Taffrail’s a good word,” continued Mr. Fogg ; “ mark that down, if you please, Mr. Groove. ‘ Her taffrail’s flying in the breeze.’”

“ Who runs the schooner on to the pirate ?” asked the stage-manager.

“ I do, sir,” said a diminutive scene-shifter, in a paper cap.

“ Go a-head, then,” answered Mr. Potter ; “ we sha’n’t have finished when the doors open. Hallo, there, Jackson !” and he shouted up to the flies ; “ send down the schooner, if Mr. Brush has finished it.”

“ Look out below !” said a voice in return, as a profile ship, or rather the bows of one, was slung down from the clouds, and taken to its place.

Mr. Fokesel, the delineator of the British tar, now leaped down from the schooner on to the deck of the pirate, and commanded Mr. Dilk to avast. He was habited in a white coat of by-gone fashion, with a little cape, and did not look much like a sailor, in his private dress.

Mr. Dilk, who did not seem at all inclined to avast, although ordered to do so with great force, answered in the same quiet and unconcerned manner :—

“Never! the child of ocean loves the dark-blue waters; dare to advance another step, and a trusty comrade fires the magazine, and blows us altogether to perdition.”

“Surrender!” said Mr. Fokesel, in mild tones, almost confidential.

“Never!” replied Mr. Dilk, with the same *sang froid*, as he quietly took his hands out of his pockets, and walked towards Mr. Fokesel.

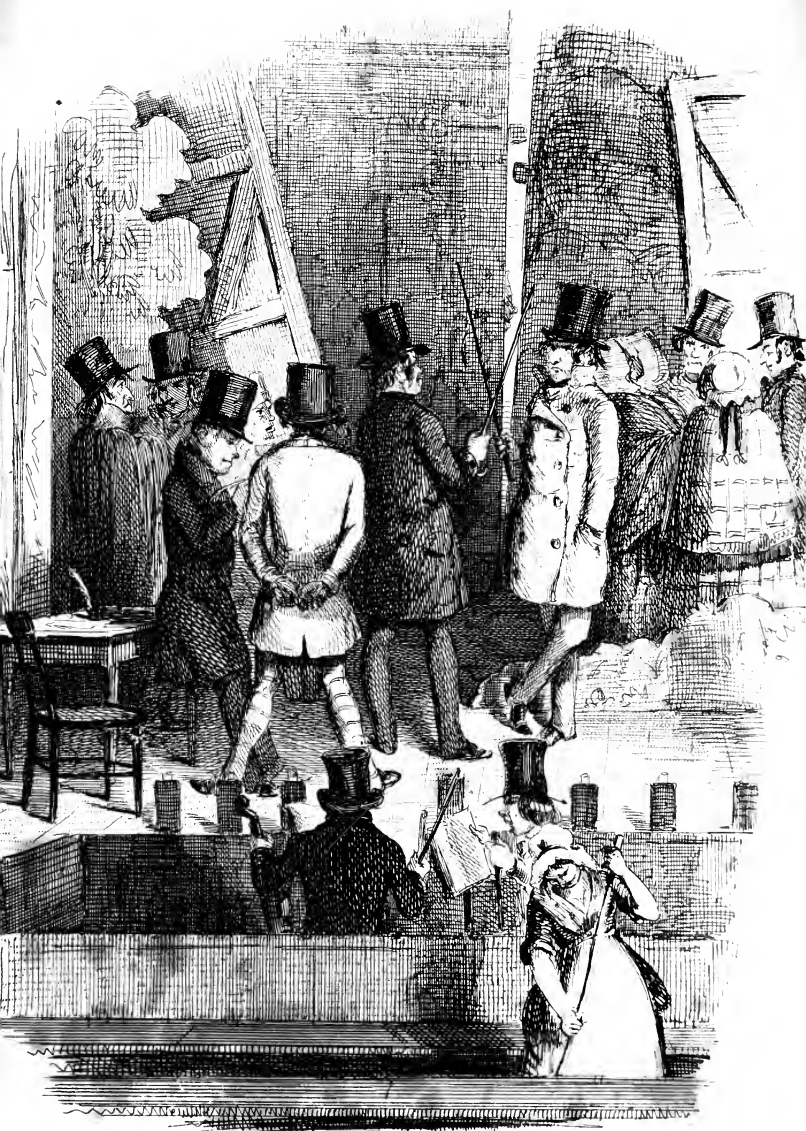
“Never,” uttered with great emphasis, is generally the signal for a combat, especially when it follows such phrases as “Villain! release that lady!”—“Let go your hold, I tell

you !” — “ Yield, miscreant !” or any other energetic command that the other party does not see the urgent necessity of complying with. A combat was therefore now coming on, and Messrs. Dilk and Fokesel commenced rehearsing it.

It was not, however, very dreadful to look at, although it was to come out uncommonly strong at night. Both the gentlemen had walking-sticks—the majority of actors at minor theatres incline to them, and affect their use,—and these supplied the place of other weapons. Mr. Dilk put his left hand back again into his pocket, as it was rather cold, and then began to fight.

“ Now, then, Fokesel,” he exclaimed, as they crossed their sticks very quietly, as though they were fearful of injuring them. “ One — two — three — under : one — two — three — over : that’s it. Go on, and now come over here.”

“ Robber’s cut, I think, here,” replied the other, counting up to twelve. “ Now—*primes* —that’s it—*sixes*.”





“Guarded thrusts all across the stage, and back. We had better try it over again to the music.”

The leader took his violin, and the fearful struggle was repeated to the ennobling solo, in the same subdued and gentlemanly manner. When finished, it was pronounced likely to prove very effective, in which opinion the author and the combatants so exactly coincided, that they partook of a hard biscuit and a glass of brandy-and-water together, to evince their mutual satisfaction.

“Now we want somebody to hang from the rope, and be shot down by Mr. Dilk.”

“I can do that,” said Mr. Dilk eagerly.

“No ; you have your celebrated fall in the third act,” said Mr. Fogg. “Besides, how can you shoot yourself down ? I think Mr. Scattergood is the man to do it. Can you hang, my friend ?”

“I can hang to anything,” said Vincent.

“I have no doubt you can,” observed Mr. Potter (who had not forgotten the sarcasm) with great meaning, looking at the prompter,

as much as to say, "I think I had him there—rather."

Nevertheless, Vincent was very valuable upon the present emergency, and he was forthwith engaged again on the instant. And then he proceeded to rehearse the business of the situation, and led the boarders from the schooner, which was done by getting up a pair of steps behind it, and leaping down in front.

The boarders were a remarkably curious band. From their general physiognomy, they might have been considered half-boarders; and, as they now came down one after another, there certainly was not much in their appearance calculated to appal the pirate; for they were men of mild deportment, arrayed in modest costume: the dark Berlin gloves with the ventilating fingers, and ill-conditioned wrapper, that had seen much worldly buffeting and trouble, as well as days gone by, pronounced superior to the present, were theirs. Theirs, in social life, was the go of gin and mystic screw, whose deep enigma they alone could solve; to them did the wardrobe adjudge its



oldest russet-boots and strangest-waisted tunics for their histrionic existence ; for their refreshment, in particular, were the gilded claret-jugs and *papier machée* apples provided at the banquets ; for on apples and gilded claret-jugs alone do stage-guests at mighty festivals revel and make merry.

At last, after four or five hours' waiting about on the cold stage, repeating, altering, cutting, and interpolating—knocking up “carpenter's scenes,” where there was scarcely time to arrange everything behind for the change,—making sure that the raging billows were in good order,—grouping the grand situations,—sinking the ship to Davy Jones's locker, which was the dry, well-lighted under-floor of the stage ; after all this, the rehearsal came to a conclusion, and the different performers were agreed to be as tolerably perfect as is usual upon the average of first representations.

It was Monday evening, sacred to the pits and galleries of transpontine theatres. Mr. Fogg, as he left the house with Vincent, observed that knots of holiday-makers were al-

ready collecting round the doors, to wait for front places attendant upon their patience. He scanned their faces with a critical eye; for upon their verdict did the fate of his drama depend. They looked good-tempered, and he rejoiced.

“A month’s run as a first piece, and a fortnight at half-price,” said Mr. Fogg, “would benefit both my reputation and my coffers. At present, my purse is trash.”

“I have also got an interest in its success, now I am engaged again,” returned Vincent, as he accompanied his patron towards a modest eating-house; for they had not time to go home.

“The dilemma was fortunate for you,” said the author; “but I am sorry you upset Mr. Potter. You may be certain he will get rid of you as soon as he can do so, plausibly. What shall you do then?”

“Trust to chance,” replied Vincent. “At present I am Fortune’s shuttlecock.”

## CHAPTER X.

## THE FIRST DAY AT MERCHANT TAILORS'.

FREDERICK slumbered away his sorrows, until his three or four fellow-pupils returned from school; and then he was aroused somewhat suddenly by a volley of caps discharged simultaneously at his head. He started up, and was greeted by a loud laugh from his future companions.

"How do you do, sir?" said one of them, with much politeness, making a low bow. "I'm afraid we have disturbed you."

"Who are you?" asked the second; "the new fellow that Snap expected?"

"Frederick Scattergood," returned the pupil, much alarmed.

"My Jove! won't you find him a trimmer, that's all?" continued the other.

“ You ’ll take cold, my man,” said the biggest of the party, picking up an old hat, and putting it on Freddy’s head. “ What a nice little boy !” he continued, giving it a thump on the crown, and knocking it down over his eyes.

“ Oh ! leave him alone, Gogsley,” cried the first speaker, with affected commiseration. “ He ’s a little mammy-sick at present. You want to go home, love, don’t you, to dear mamma ?” he continued, pulling the hat from his eyes, and kicking it across the room.

“ Hold up your head like a man,” cried Gogsley, seizing hold of Frederick’s hair, and pulling him back by it, as though he would have torn out a handful. “ Let ’s see what you ’re like.”

“ You hurt me very much,” cried Frederick, under the torture. “ Please, sir, leave go my hair.”

“ What will you give me to let go, then ?” said his tormentor.

“ Anything you like, sir, that ’s in my box,” replied the little fellow, very meekly.





*S. Lee*

“And where is your box?”

“I’m sitting on it,” was the answer.

“Well, get off it, then,” exclaimed Gogsley, pushing him off upon the ground. “Now, you fellows, cribby first choose, and feign smuggings.”

They lifted the box on to the table, and then made Frederick, who was beginning to cry very piteously, open the lock. The first thing they saw was the accordion, which Mr. Bodle had given him, and which Gogsley directly seized on, holding up at arms’ length, and shouting out,

“*Quis ?*”

“*Ego !*” cried the other three all at once.

“Yours, Plunkett,” he exclaimed, handing it over to a genteel-looking youth, in broad lay-down collars, who directly commenced a very rapid fantasia upon it, introducing no particular air, which terminated in putting several of the notes entirely *hors de combat*.

The cake was the next object of attraction, with its fortress of jam on the top. Gogsley thrust his finger through the paper covering,

and, when he had discovered what it was, appropriated it to himself, by carrying it to his locker; whilst another boy, named Marston, pulled out the cake, and tossed it up to the ceiling, catching it like a ball as it descended.

“Who made this cake? Is it good?” asked Marston.

“Clara—she’s my sister,” returned Frederick.

This reply immediately gave rise to a series of questions from all the others as to how old Clara was, what she was like, if she was pretty, what colour her eyes were, when she would call to see him, and which of them he thought she would fall in love with; all which inquiries Frederick answered to the best of his ability, consistent with his endeavours to avoid giving offence to any of them.

At six o’clock five large cups of a very remarkable infusion, humorously called tea, the first pleasantry that any one of a jocular disposition would have detected in the proceedings of the establishment, were brought up for



their refection. The scholars were provided with tea, to impress them with a proper notion of the importance of the noble institution they were members of, as contra-distinguished to the plebeian milk and water of common academies. There were also some substantial slices of bread, with thin veneers of butter on their surface, which were mainly instrumental in the disappearance of Frederick's jam, of which he never partook ; for his spirits were too low and broken to allow him to eat.

As soon as this meal had finished, the others took very little more notice of him, but left him sitting by the fire, whilst they began their exercises for the following day ; varying their studies by incidental combats relative to the proximity of the candle, which Gogsley insisted upon having close to himself. For Gogsley had an imposition,—an hundred lines of the first *Æneid* to transcribe,—which he informed Freddy would be his especial task in future, but that at present he was too great a fool to undertake it.

All this went on with little variation until

about half past eight, when they were told it was time to go to rest. Frederick found that he was to share his bed with Plunkett, which somewhat comforted him, as he was more quiet and civil in his manner than Gogsley; for Gogsley was, in every sense of the word, a bully. He was idle, overgrown, and ignorant. He delighted to inflict punishment with knotted handkerchiefs and the buckle ends of straps, or with his fists upon the twisted arms of his victims, hectoring over all those who were too mild or defenceless to resist or to attack him again, and cringing, in an equal degree, to those who were his superiors in brute strength alone; for in intellect nearly all surpassed him.

There were three cheerless beds in the attic, to which the boys now ascended. Beyond these, the room boasted little more furniture than the one below. Freddy felt very miserable, and quite worn out; he undressed quickly, and was getting into bed, when Gogsley told him that he must wait until the last, and put out the candle. And, as that amiable young gentleman did not hurry himself, the

new pupil remained for a quarter of an hour shivering in the cold, perched on the top of his clothes-trunk at the foot of his bed, and embracing his knees, in the attitude of little boys on the bank of a river, inquiring how warm the water was, whilst their trembling companions, already immersed, and scarcely able to speak for frigidity, gasp out, "B-b-beautiful!"

"Halloo, Plunkett, you've caught it to-day. How did you like it?" said one of the others, named Jollit, a small boy with a large head, who was constantly talking of what his brother Joe could do.

"What's that to you, Cashbox?" was the reply.

This sobriquet was applied to Jollit, because his friends were in trade in the city. The others were sons of gentlemen.

"I don't care for that, nor as much again," continued Plunkett, looking over his shoulder at two livid weals that sloped across it. "By Jove! wasn't Rasper in a rage! He split his cane right up."

“Would you sooner have a licking or an impo’?” asked another.

“A licking, I should think,” said Plunkett; “that’s soon over; but an impo’ may keep you in all the evening. There’s two hundred lines knocked into two. I don’t care for the cane a bit.”

And he laughed as he regarded the blue stripes across his back.

“You’re quite hardened to it,” said Gogsley. “Your hide’s as tough as a donkey’s, from constant thwacks.”

“I wish mine was,” said Jollit. “He hurt me jolly yesterday, and made my hand bleed, breaking a chilblain. Isn’t that bad?”

“Serves you right,” said Gogsley. “Gentlemen never have chilblains.—Now, you new boy, shove out the light.”

Frederick put out the candle, and got into bed, contriving, after a little tearful rumination, to go to sleep, even on the nine inches of space, half sacking, half mattress, to which Plunkett drove him. Had he been chummed upon any of the others, Gogsley would have doubled

them up in the bedstead, which was a turn-up one ; but Plunkett's arm was rather powerful, strong enough to enable him to vindicate the truth of his favourite declaration, that he never stood any nonsense. So the tormentor thought it best not to put this piece of practical humour into action upon the present occasion.

The next morning broke cold and dark. The light came creeping through the windows, as though some magic power had changed the panes of glass to a dirty orange colour during the night. Without, there was a dense city fog, so thick and dismal, that the chimes of the nearest church in Thames Street could hardly get through it, but fought for every inch of murky atmosphere, and hung upon its ropy volumes as if they had been a part and parcel of it.

The boys appeared to awake by common consent all at the same moment, and then grumblingly turned out of bed. Gogsley was the last, because he waited until he had made Frederick spread his counterpane upon the floor for him to stand upon whilst he dressed ;

for there was not a trace of carpeting in the room, not even a slip at the side of the beds.

“There’s no water again in the jugs,” said Plunkett. “Whose turn is it to go down after some?”

“Oh, the new fellow’s, of course,” said Gogsley. “Now, young one, look alive, and cut down to the kitchen. Take both the jugs.”

“I don’t know where to go, sir,” answered Fred.

“You’ll find out fast enough,” replied the bully; “or, if you don’t, I’ll teach you. Follow your nose down stairs. Now—what are you waiting for? Do you want to be started?”

Frederick would have said that he had no slippers, and they had left their shoes down stairs to be blacked; but Gogsley began to twist a towel to “flick” him with, as he termed it; so the young scholar hurried out of the room, and pattered with his naked feet down the cold stone stairs.

It was nearly dark in the kitchen, and the servants had not risen. As he timidly pushed open the door, a huge cat sprang from the dresser, and rushed past him, knocking down a glass jug in her progress, and breaking it to atoms ; and one or two dissipated black beetles, who had been keeping festival all night, scuffled off to their holes, running over his feet in their anxious hurry at being caught upon the loose at such an advanced hour. But the dread of punishment up stairs overcame his fright at these visitants, and he filled his jugs at the cistern, and crept back again, cold and wretched, but not sorry to escape from the close mingled odour of sulphurous vapour and small beer, which kitchens generally give forth at these untimely periods of the morning.

The toilets did not occupy much time, and in another quarter of an hour they left Mr. Snap's house for the school. Fires were gleaming down some of the areas in the court, and forges on the bottom floors of the Thames-street warehouses blazed ruddy and bright in the cold dark morning. How comfortable

the workmen looked ! How Frederick envied the very servants he saw through the windows, and almost wished that he was one of them.

As they plunged deep into the narrow thoroughfare, the fog appeared condensed in proportion. The street-lamps, which were still burning, changed from the vivid jet of flame into large, dull masses of reddish light ; and the rumbling of wheels, and oaths of sable coalheavers ; the lurid gleams streaming across the road at various openings ; and the long descending passages to places lost in gloom and distance, altogether formed a very fair representation of what the entrance to the infernal regions is described to be by those poets of lively imagination who have been there.

“There !” said Gogsley suddenly, after a rapid examination of his strap of books and pockets, “I have left my imposition behind me.”

“Then I wouldn’t be in your boots,” said Plunkett, “although they are real Wellingtons. You must look sharp if you want to save prayers.”



“Here, new fellow ! Scatterbrains !—what ’s your name ?” cried Gogsley, turning to Fred.  
“You must go back after it.”

Frederick in vain pleaded ignorance of the way. Gogsley promised to mark a map of it on his shoulders with his strap if he did not start immediately, so he was compelled to go back.

He was some time finding out the house. He turned up a wrong lane, and got into a labyrinth of lofty woolstores and warehouses, where everybody appeared too busy to answer his inquiries. At last, he came by chance to a dismal churchyard, that he recollected passing, one enormous reeking dead-pit, whose limits bulged out with repletion, and over which the gravestones rose up in the gloom, like the ghosts of those beneath, waiting for the real light of morning to drive them back again to their foul tenements. Guided by this spot, he reached the entrance of the court, and got to Mr. Snap’s door. Here there was another delay of some minutes, until the servants came down ; and then more time was consumed in

looking after the imposition in Gogsley's locker, where at length they found it, and he started off again.

A clock struck the quarters as he left the house. Once—twice—thrice—four times ! It was eight o'clock, and he would be late at the school. He set off running as fast as he could, and following the road to the best of his recollection, was scarcely three minutes in reaching Merchant Tailors'.

The great door was open, and he went quickly up the staircase. Here there was little doubt about where to go, the only other place he could get to being the gloomy cloisters. But everything was quite quiet ; so different to what he expected it would be in such a large school. When he got to the landing, he found the door shut ; but, peeping through a hole hacked with a knife, he could see a vast hall, lined on each side by boys standing up, and holding lighted tapers, and in the middle, one was kneeling down upon one knee, reading prayers. In about a minute the door was opened.

“What’s your name?” said one of the scholars, who was standing at the door.

Frederick told him, with great respect.

“That will do,” said the other, writing it down.

“Am I too late, sir?” asked the little fellow timidly.

“Don’t you see you are?” said the other. “You will not be thrashed until after breakfast this morning.”

Before Freddy could recover from the fright into which this announcement threw him, Gogsley came up for his imposition; and then told him to sit on the first form.

“I am going to be beaten, sir,” said Frederick, as he gave him the papers.

“Then you ought to have been quicker,” said Gogsley. “Never mind; you will be bumped against the new boys’ pillar in the cloisters at breakfast time, and that will prepare you for it.”

The classes were here called up, and Frederick was left by himself, in great distress, at the end of the form.

## CHAPTER XI.

MR. BOLT APPEARS ANXIOUS TO VISIT AN OLD COUNTRY  
HOUSE.—THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

WE have occasionally seen certain plays of very wonderful construction, whose ingenuity even Mr. Glenalvon Fogg might have envied, in which the events that were going on in different parts of the house, in two, three, or even four rooms, were represented before the audience all at once. On these occasions, the scene usually resembled a gigantic doll's house, with the street-door open, which in those tenements is generally of formidable proportions, inasmuch as it comprises the whole front of the building, leaving the house, when unclosed, in that state of unreserved display respecting its internal economy, which we only see where violent architectural sections of dwellings are

being made to form new streets in dense neighbourhoods. And then there is very great food for speculation in the different colours and patterns of the paper; the outline apparitions of departed staircases, that still haunt the walls; and the rusty grates still clinging to the fireplace, like household gods perched up aloft in niches.

The staircases have, however, but little to do with dolls' houses; they are an accommodation never thought of by the builders of those tiny freeholds; nor, possibly, would they be much used if constructed, the chief resident inmate being a wax lodger, who sleeps perpetually in a small bed, tightly trimmed with pink calico, and is found by children of an inquiring disposition to be entirely without legs. And when it has been ordained that the small Dutch company which assembles in the kitchen should hold a reunion in the drawing-room, like house-lamb and alien babies, they are usually brought up by hand. So that, since even the labours of that wondrous architect, the bee, prove economy of space and material

to be the first considerations in building, the makers of dolls' abodes may, upon the whole, be regarded as clear-headed and talented men, from the formation of "savings' banks" upwards, to those elaborate four-roomed houses, which Lilliputian upholsterers undertake to furnish luxuriously for two-and-sixpence.

If this simultaneous presentation of different actions could be effected as well in novels or histories as on the stage, a great economy of time, and possibly a diminution of tedium, might be the result. Doubtless, with a little practice, two chapters could be studied at once, similarly as pianists embrace the meaning of the two clefs at one and the same time. But as the large proportion of readers have not paid much attention to this comprehensive method, we must at present go on in the old-fashioned style, which, like many other antique notions, is perhaps the best after all.

Vincent is, as we are aware, still located with Mr. Fogg. How long the fellowship will continue may not yet be told. Freddy is a scholar of Merchant Tailors': the duration of

his stay there is equally uncertain. Unscreened allotments, portioned off from the mysterious coal-stores of Mr. Chicksand at sixpence the scuttle, shed warmth around the lodgings of Clara and her parents. And so we will wind off another end from the web which surrounds the cocoon of our history, until we get the various threads into one line for its conclusion.

The time is yet winter ; the place not very far from the locality wherein we first met our hero journeying up to London in the market-waggon. That dismal and swampy range, stretched along the banks of the river for miles ; but in its inland direction was more circumscribed ; for there it gradually became cultivated ; the willows disappeared, and trees of less melancholy aspect, upon whom the effects of constant water-drinking had not left such a dull, depressed physiognomy, took their places. Dry turf, too, with underwood and hawthorn, supplanted the plashy fields of rushes ; and the numerous water-courses, that intersected the marshes in every direction, were seen no

more. And still farther from the coast were knolls of ground—warm, sunny rises, upon which the corn undulated in summer time; with clumps of goodly trees, and long belts of waving foliage, which at various openings disclosed fine old houses, high and dry upon the headland, whose windows, it could be readily imagined, commanded views far over the marshes and river, even to the sweeping outline of rich hill and valley, that adorned the opposite and pleasant county of Kent.

There was one old mansion, above others, in which we are chiefly interested. As the traveller caught the first view of it over the grove that lodged the cawing rooks who were its perpetual sentinels, it appeared nothing but a wonderful collection of chimneys in every fashion, from the early Tudor to that of the latest century; and when he got nearer, its windows were a perfect marvel, as well from their number as their quaintness.

There were large bay ones, which were known at once to belong to “the hall,” with heavy stone mullions and carved transoms, so



large indeed, that the recess which they formed was a perfect room of itself, with one entire side of glass,—not smooth, clear plate, but small dusky panes, full of flaws and zigzags, latticed into all sorts of fantasies, and topped by unintelligible coats of arms, which the sun caused to march in solemn illuminated procession along the matting of the floor every day he shone. And high up, in sly nooks and corners, were windows much smaller, so oddly situated under the eaves of the numerous gables, that you wondered what on earth could be their utility as regarded lighting any practicable and approachable apartment. But they were windows of great humour for all that, and seemed to enjoy mightily the joke of their position; for when the wind blew hard, and the sunlight fell upon them, they winked and twinkled so merrily, that you only felt annoyed you could not enter into their fun. There were other small windows low down, almost level with the ground; but they were sullen and suspicious: the very inhabitants of the house could not find out what they had been

built for, except for the especial enlightenment of the family rats who lived behind the wain-scots ; for they let in the day to nothing else.

The architecture of the house was after many styles and tastes. Unity had been sacrificed to convenience, and the different proprietors had pulled one room down, or built up another, as suited their fancy, until it was difficult to tell which was supposed to be the chief front of the house, until the fine porch was discovered, with its old and massy door, fitted into a low, deep arch of crumbling stone, and studded with iron nails. And was there not a keyhole too?—slightly,—with its rusty gigantic iron scutcheon. No one ever saw one like it out of a pantomime, or the prevalent idea that fairies usually choose that entrance for coming into a house, would not seem so great a stretch of the imagination after all, even supposing them to be as big as ordinary mortals. But all this singularity only made Brabants, for so was the house called, more picturesque and venerable. Even the sun seemed to respect it, and his warmest beams

always lingered with something of fondness round the old grey structure, long after the surrounding coppices were wrapped in shade.

About a quarter of a mile from this house—the spire of the modest church could be seen peeping above the intervening shaw—there was a small village; such a quiet, secluded place. It consisted only of one street, and this was but a part of the road which ran from some unimportant spot to nowhere in particular. Indeed, its existence as a road, with a continuation either way, might have been doubted, had not carts occasionally made their appearance in the village, which must evidently have arrived by that *route*; for when the inhabitants wished to visit adjacent towns, they chose wonderfully obscure footpaths, which ran through fields, pleasant in summer, with fresh green turf and hedge-flowers, and, when near the village, resounding with the merry voices of children at play. For children ever love the fields; their feelings are closely allied to nature, and they like to commune with her, although they understand not why. Men seek the fields

for tranquillity, or a change from pent-up worldliness ; but children look upon each wild flower as a play-fellow. They will talk to the yellow petals of the cowslip as they string them into chains.

The snow had not yet gone, however, at the present time. The solemn wintry twilight was creeping over Brabants, and the surrounding copses, now dark and leafless ; whilst the ruddy light of fires within gleamed from its various windows ; and now and then sparks shot up from the fantastic chimneys, in evidence of the huge billets that were blazing upon the iron "dogs" of the hearth. At one of the gates belonging to the homestall at the back of the house, two men were leaning against the palings, and talking to each other in low, cautious tones. One of them had the appearance of a labourer about the farm ; the other was Mr. Cricket, or Bolt, as he gave his true name, with whom we last parted on the night of Vincent's arrival in Covent Garden.

"I tell you they're as safe as if you had them at your own place in London," said the

man. "No one goes to that shed but myself, and the snow this morning covered everything over as smooth as glass. How long is 'em to lie thus?"

"Till the waggon goes up again—mayhap three days," replied Bolt. "It was the best run we ever made, and it would be a pity to lose it. How's the guv'nor?—dark?"

"All right there," returned the other. "He'd pretty soon let us know if it wasn't. Only I think the sooner you take them off the better. His nephew is coming here to stay in a week, and he'll want the place for his dogs."

"Why, he hasn't been gone three months."

"No; but they do say he comes to keep company with Miss Amy; leastwise, so I hear in the kitchen. It's no go, though,—I could tell him that, much as the old gent would like it."

"How's that?" asked Bolt carelessly.

"'Cause there's somebody else. Master's got money—not much, I know, but still he's got some—so 's t'other, and I reckon he wants

to keep all the eggs in one basket, as the saying is. He won't."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, I know she was in love with young —what's his name?—there, that lived in the village, and went to sea. I used to see them often out together, when they never knowed nothing about it."

"I suppose it don't make much difference to us two whether she has both or neither," observed Bolt, "provided they don't open their eyes too much about the estate when they come into it. I reckon you wouldn't like the pheasants to be counted."

"He'll be in luck, whoever it is," resumed the man, taking no heed of Mr. Bolt's insinuation. "There's silver waiters as big as cart-wheels, and spoons like spades, with no end of 'em neither."

"Where are they?" inquired Bolt.

"Ah! you'd like to know, now; wouldn't you?" said his companion. "A cargo of them would pay better than sperrits."

"Now, look here, Chandler," said Bolt

meaningly ; “ there ’s no mistake but we could transport one another, if we was inclined so to do. Anything you tells me is—so ! ”

And he pantomimically expressed the word he intended to be understood by clapping his hand against his open mouth : adding directly afterwards,

“ So there ’s no use in concealing—nohow. Only let us know when there ’s a chance of anything to be sacked, and you shall have your rights, just and honest. Eh ? ”

“ It ain’t hanging matter, if it was found out,” observed Chandler, apparently meditating out loud.

“ How can it be found out ? ” replied Bolt. “ Once get the things to London, and half-an-hour will settle their business. I ’ve know’d worse-looking schemes than this.”

“ Like enough—like enough,” answered the other, lifting up a pail at his side. “ I suppose you ’ll be down at The Billet this evening. There ’s a pig to be raffled for.”

“ You ’ll see me, if nothing turns up,” said Bolt, as he opened the gate, and left the

yard. "Don't forget, you know — not a word."

Chandler winked in acquiescence, and carried his burden towards the house; whilst Bolt strode off across the fields, crushing the snow beneath his heavy shoes as he whistled in accompaniment; and was soon out of sight in the increasing darkness.

The window of the library at Brabants was the chief point from which the ruddy light broke forth as the day departed. It was a fine old room, with a huge carved chimney-piece, a wainscot of dark oak, and hanging-buttresses from every point of the elaborate ceiling; and was usually occupied by the residents as the sitting-room. There was little appearance of splendour or affluence in the appointments of the room. The furniture was mostly old; in many instances its antiquity amounted to dilapidation; and on some of the panels, which enframed pieces of faded and half-indistinct tapestry, the work had burst from its fastening, and disclosed the ruinous state of the wall behind. Neither was the remainder of the



house in much better condition. Every portion of it spoke of the inability of the fortune of the owner to maintain the establishment in its proper condition, both internally and externally ; from the irregular and rudely-mended park-palings which surrounded the estate, allowing entrance to every depredator who chose to make an inroad upon the gardens or preserves, to the worn and irregular flooring of the hall, over a portion of which more tapestry, dragged down from the upper rooms of the house, was now spread in the ignoble position of a carpet. It was long, too, since the sounds of revelry had filled that old hall. But for its noble hearth and goodly windows, it might have been taken for a barn or granary, if one or two odd pieces of corroded armour, and a few rotting and gloomy banners that drooped from its walls had been removed. And, indeed, the gallery which ran round its upper portion had been partially consecrated to this use, wherein the rats rioted in banquets of repletion. For the fortunes of the house had not yet sunk so low as to give these vermin

their mysterious warning that it was time to quit it.

In the library were two persons,—the owner of the house and his daughter ; they were the sole occupants of Brabants, for the mother had long slept in the family vault, beneath the worn pavement of the little church before mentioned. Mr. Grantham was still in the prime of life. He had married young, almost in his minority ; and he had a proud bearing, and quick, perceptive manner, which gave him the appearance of being younger than he really was. Few would have imagined, upon sight only, that he was the father of the handsome girl who now occupied the other side of the fireplace, engaged in embroidering some canvas to cover a *prie-dieu*, one or two specimens of which industry already adorned the chairs of the room, and formed the only exceptions, with their bright and glowing colours, to its general worn-out aspect.

For a time they were both silent, as the fire threw their forms in giant and dancing shadows on the opposite wall. The father

was looking intently at the burning log, as though he sought companionship in its fitful blaze, his quick, anxious breathing alone disturbing the quiet; and his child was pursuing her work with a hurried intensity of application, which proved that it was only serving as a cover to turbulent and anxious thoughts.

“Well, Amy,” said Mr. Grantham, after a long pause, “will you favour me with a reply? I have been some time expecting it.”

“I scarcely know what answer you would have me give,” replied his daughter timidly, as she looked up for an instant from her work.

“I like Herbert. I always did.”

“And you would have no objection, then, to become his wife, if he felt inclined to pay his addresses to you?”

A slight and passing tremor shook the girl's frame as she heard these words. She replied,

“I did not mean that, sir. I implore you not to press the subject. I have told you I like my cousin, but I could never marry him.”

“ You mean, you have made up your mind to refuse a desired and eligible match. Is it not so ? ” asked her father sternly. “ What can induce you to form this foolish, ill-judged determination ? ”

“ I do not love him, sir,—at least, as you would have me, ‘ from my heart. ’ ”

“ You would tell me you have a heart,” replied Mr. Grantham. “ You may have one ; but it is cold and insensible as this marble. Amy, why is this ? ”

“ Because my heart must be given, father, to my husband,—I mean,—if ever I were to marry. He shall not purchase it.”

“ Pshaw ! ” exclaimed Mr. Grantham as he rose from his seat, and paced up and down the room. “ This is the idle nonsense of a school-girl. Herbert’s family is in every respect equal to our own ; his possessions far greater. He is all a girl might wish for.”

“ I do not deny it,” replied his daughter ; “ but I would not have him entertain a hope that I may become his wife. It can never be.”

“Amy, this is absurd,” said Mr. Grantham. And, advancing towards her, he fixed his eye keenly on her, as he continued, “There are other reasons for this determination, of which you have kept me in ignorance.”

The girl bent timidly before her father’s gaze, and replied in a low, tremulous voice,

“I will not deceive you, father: there are.”

“I suspected as much,” observed Mr. Grantham, as he walked coldly back to his seat. “And, may I ask these reasons? There is another attachment,—is it not so?”

“You have asked me, and I will answer you,” replied Amy, as she looked towards him with an earnest and appealing gaze. “I have long struggled with my feelings in silence, until I thought my reason would give way beneath the conflict, for I have no one now in whom I can confide. I have striven to overcome the attachment, but all in vain. I *do* love another. Father! pity me—pity me—I beseech you!”

And rushing towards her father, she threw

herself upon her knees at his feet, and burst into a violent flood of tears.

Mr. Grantham had not been prepared for this outbreak of sorrow. He raised his daughter gently, and drawing her towards him, parted her long, dark hair, and kissed her with more affection than he might have been thought capable of exhibiting, from his usual staid bearing.

“My poor girl!” he exclaimed kindly; for Amy’s allusion to her lonely position had recalled her mother to his mind, and he was softened by the recollection. “And who is it that you love? Will you not tell me?”

“Do not ask me,” replied the weeping girl. “Some day you shall know all. Let me retire now; but do not think from this confession that I shall ever cease to respect or esteem *you*.”

She withdrew herself from her father’s arms, and, covering her face with her hands, broke into a fresh deluge of tears; and then saluting Mr. Grantham, she retired from the room, and sought her chamber. But for some hours after

a light from its fretted casement, glimmering upon the rimy branches of the trees that occasionally swept the window, showed that she had not yet found an asylum from her sorrows in slumber.

## CHAPTER XII.

“THE LEE SHORE OF LIFE” IS PRODUCED.

“THE Lee Shore of Life” at length underwent the ordeal of public opinion. Soon after the doors of the theatre had opened, and the first rush of the eager multitude, who had been beguiling the last two hours of attendance under the portico by practical jokes and humorous salutations, had subsided, Mr. Glenalvon Fogg meekly entered, and took his place in a dark corner on a back seat of the upper boxes. He passed unobserved; no one unacquainted with the mysteries of literature would have imagined that an author so much resembled an everyday man. And then, shrouding himself in his cloak, with that retiring modesty always attendant upon true genius and embarrassed affairs,



he awaited the representation, anxiously scanning the general physiognomy of the jury upon whose verdict his fate was to depend.

The doors of boxes slammed, the buzz of human voices increased to a roar, and the orchestra commenced a needless piece of inaudible pleasantry, termed an overture. Its concluding chords alone reached Mr. Fogg's ear, and intense was the thrill they caused to pervade his bosom. Then came two minutes of intense expectancy, the scene not being ready, towards the end of which the people began to hiss, and terrible voices, apparently from the clouds, cried out, "Pull up!" with awe-inspiring energy, until the prompter's bell rang everybody into something like order, and the opening chorus of the performers struggled very energetically to rise above the opposition murmur of the audience, in which endeavour, after great exertion; it ultimately triumphed.

The drama proceeded with tolerable smoothness, although the majority of Mr. Fogg's pet jokes missed fire, in spite of the covert applause he endeavoured to establish after each

one, with his heel against the panel of the box, —applause which died away, blushing and confused, as nobody took it up. But when Rose Cottage told the proud lord “that the heart of a virtuous English girl was a jewel far richer than the coronet of the haughty peeress,” there was such a general burst of cheering, that it made amends for all the other omissions. And this enthusiasm was well sustained by the appearance of Tom Ratline, just as the father was being expelled from his cottage, who called the broker’s men “land-sharks,” and upbraided them “for scuttling a fine old hull amongst the breakers,” recommending them also “to sheer off, if they did not wish their topsail figure-heads spliced to a marlinspike.” All this being in support of a great right, viz. that “nature’s aristocracy” have no right to pay any rent unless they like, met with very great applause. And here was Mr. Fogg’s great dramatic tact clearly apparent, in writing for the minor theatres. For, however flat may have been the progress of a piece, the author has only to abuse the superior classes of society, and insinuate the “we’ve-as-

much-a-right-as-they-have" theory of possession into the bosoms of the pit and galleries, and his philanthropy will always meet with its due reward.

In spite of the fearful demons and ruffian pirates, with other desperate characters that Mr. Fogg delighted to create, his mind was naturally mild and gentle, even to simplicity. Yet, notwithstanding his benevolent disposition, we almost doubt whether he did not wish, several times in the course of the performance, that the infant in arms, who cried unceasingly in the gallery, might fall over the front rail into the pit and break its neck, previously to being pulled up again to its solicitous parent by the united handkerchiefs and shawls of the company. But even here his better nature always prevailed in a short time; and when the act-drop came down, and one ancient woman exclaimed "Beautiful!" in the fulness of her admiration, as she applauded with a dislocated umbrella, unconscious of the author's presence, Mr. Fogg could have clasped her to his heart, albeit she was the queen of that ano-

malous tribe of elderly females, in wonderful bonnets and unestablished toilets, who come in with orders before seven, and people the upper boxes.

At length the curtain fell upon the last scene, and the suspense of our author was at an end. The drama was completely successful. And if nobody had been aware of the fact, the management took care to let everybody into the secret ; for it was duly placarded as “ the greatest hit ever made, *even* at that theatre,” which, as every piece successively achieved the same progressive superiority, was in a fair way of arriving, at last, at some climax of prosperity beyond all human conception to form even a dim idea of. The weekly papers, too, gave it their full meed of praise, all agreeing, from the leading journal down to the Halfpenny Tomahawk, that it was full of stirring interest and exciting situations.

Mr. Fogg rushed round to the stage-door, and was behind the scenes almost before the stage was cleared, or the last applause had died away. Possibly this hurry was because he

thought he might be called for. And indeed the prompter believed he heard cries of "Fogg! Fogg!" amidst the cheering; but they were not decided enough to bring the author before the curtain. But his gratitude was nevertheless unbounded. He thanked all the actors, collectively and individually, for their exertions; he thanked the prompter for his attention; he expressed his obligation to the carpenters, the "scene-shifters" of the common world, in a shape of three gallons of half-and-half, one to the traps, another to the stage, and the third to the flies,—a piece of remarkable liberality; he told Scutt to go to the public house and order whatever he liked up to sixpence; and finally he took Vincent's hand, and, shaking it with hysterical warmth, declared to him confidently that he could take a leap or a fall in every respect equal to Mr. Dilk. Having done all this, he quitted the theatre with his companion, leaving Mr. Groove, the prompter, to make such "cuts" as he thought advisable for its second representation. And Mr. Groove was unequalled in this task.

If a question was asked at page five, and he found an answer at page nine that appeared applicable, he was accustomed to score out all the intermediate dialogue with his fatal pencil. This he called "bringing it up nearer together, and making it play close." Sometimes authors entertained a different opinion about the advantages of this abridgment; but Mr. Groove always got the upper hand in the end.

"I hope you are satisfied with the success of your play," said Vincent to Mr. Fogg as they left the theatre.

"It is a great hit," replied his patron; "although your situation is immensely dangerous."

"Oh! that's nothing," said the other carelessly. "I have fallen twice the distance."

"I am speaking of it as connected with the feelings inspired by the plot," continued Mr. Fogg; "it is dramatically dangerous, not practically. But, nothing venture, nothing have. I think I shall be able to show Mumford that others can write nautical dramas as well as himself—eh?"

“ Oh, certainly,” answered Vincent ; not, however, having the least idea that Mumford was a rival author, who wrote “ The Nore Lights ; or, the Wreck of the Goodwin Sands,” which ran all the season.

“ A month as a first piece I think I calculated on,” soliloquized Mr. Fogg ; “ and two weeks at half-price, at half-a-guinea a night. Six times six is thirty-six—eighteen guineas : come, that will do.”

“ ~~Then~~ you said something about the country, I thought ?” said Vincent.

“ The country,” rejoined Mr. Fogg, “ is shy : the provincial drama is declining, and its halls are dark and lonely. The dress-circle becomes one large private box of four, and the policeman occupies the gallery. The days when we got half-a-crown an act are long since gone : they departed with those of gipsying.”

It was Mr. Fogg’s usual custom of an evening to be lost in reflection whenever he was going over Waterloo Bridge,—an abstraction arising from his unceasing endeavours to render the shot-tower available in a melodrama, which

he thought some day of producing under the name of "The Mysteries of Lambeth." And on the present occasion he walked onward in silence, until he came against the wrong turnstile, which drew back his attention to passing events, and more particularly to a facetious gentleman, who was blocking up the toll, whilst he begged the keeper to oblige him with a sovereign's worth of halfpence, and not to mind the light ones; and also challenged him to toss up whether he would take a penny, or nothing; finally requesting to know, with great politeness, as a point of much interest, whether people who drowned themselves from the parapet paid as much for going over the bridge sideways as if they traversed it longitudinally. But, as turnpike-men are slow appreciators of jokes, and those on Waterloo Bridge especially so, the only answer returned was that he would "stow his gaff,"—a *patois* expression, which sounded slightly nautical to Mr. Fogg's ears, although he knew no more of its practical meaning than if he had been told to reef his toplights, or put his compass hard-a-port.



“That voice!” exclaimed Mr. Fogg, as the facetious gentleman again spoke. “Can it be possible? No, it isn’t; yes, it is: those features! It is Mr. Jollit.”

Mr. Joe Jollit, for it was that hilarious individual, having blocked up the toll long enough to collect a little crowd behind him, now went through, followed by Vincent and the author.

“Yes, you’re right, Foggy,” said Mr. Jollit. “I’ve been all the way over to applaud your piece. What do you think of that—eh?”

“My noble benefactor!” exclaimed Mr. Fogg as he seized his hand. “Permit me to introduce my friend, Mr. Scattergood, the gentleman who came down the rope; Mr. Jollit, Mr. Scattergood.”

“Proud of the honour, sir,” said Mr. Joe, touching the front of his hat with the top of his stick. “I’m an old friend of Mr. Fogg’s, although I have not seen him for some time. But, you know, it isn’t strange for Fogg to be *miss’d*. Come, I rather think that will do—eh?”

And then Mr. Jollit dug his stick into the author’s ribs, previously to fencing at a lamp-

post ; and told Mr. Fogg not to put the witticism in his next play ; which is a sort of conventional pleasantry applicable to all sorts of joking before authors : concluding this outburst of animal spirits by running after a hackney-coach that came through the gate, and riding behind it up to the corner of the Strand, where he waited for them."

"Still the same gay heart !" exclaimed Mr. Fogg to Vincent, in tones of admiration. "Three and twenty summers have passed lightly over his head, and yet in energy he is a giant. When I had a ticket-night last year he sold me six-and-thirty shillings' worth. The Bank of England nobly did its duty at that eventful crisis in my affairs."

The latter part of this speech was somewhat enigmatical to Vincent, who did not know Mr. Jollit's occupation ; and any connexion between Mr. Fogg and the Bank of England was still more remarkable, as, indeed, was the mention of any bank ; except the one upon which the wild thyme was reported to blow, and which he occasionally affirmed he knew.

“ Well,” said Mr. Joe, as they once more joined him, “ I’m going to the Gooseberries to-night. We have not seen you there for ever-so-long. It was there, you know, I first met you. And pray, bring your friend.”

“ What are the Gooseberries ?” inquired Vincent.

“ A club of gents,” replied Mr. Fogg, “ principally literary and dramatic ; who meet for harmony and social converse. You will be well received as my friend : and it may be of use to you to know them.”

“ It is not expensive, I hope ?” said Vincent quietly, looking to the state of his own treasury.

“ By no means,” replied Mr. Fogg. “ Besides, you must go this evening as my guest, and drink success to ‘ The Lee Shore.’ ”

## CHAPTER XIII.

A CLUB OF LITERARY AND DRAMATIC GENTS.

THE various members who collectively formed "The Gooseberries" were accustomed to meet once a-week at a house of public entertainment at the end of a court in the vicinity of the great theatres, where a room was specially kept for their accommodation.

The tavern was essentially a theatrical one. The landlord himself had been an actor; the greater portion of those who regularly frequented the house were performers; and the staple conversation of the company related to the drama and its accessories. The coffee-room in itself was a union of several little clubs; for every box had its peculiar set of occupiers, who met there night after night, to

discuss the merits of the different pieces and managements; quietly submitting hints and rumours to their neighbours, in under-tones, or giving out opinions in a loud and dictatorial manner to the whole room, the more energetic, as they appeared contrary to generally received notions, or those of the majority of the audience. Besides the daily theatrical programmes, there were playbills of various kinds hung round the room, impaled upon the hat-pegs. Some were of country theatres, sent up by enterprising subordinates of the large houses, to shew that they were playing Hamlet at Leamington or Wolverhampton, as the case might be. Others were benefit-announcements of names unknown to fame, which did not appear at the head of the placards of the day, so that the great world was in ignorance of the fact; but whose owners distributed these, their private bills, amongst the shops and taverns they frequented, to be hung round the neck of the plaster brigand who guarded the dry cheroots in the window of the vendor of dusky, sun-bleached cigars; or promoted to

the dignity of being wafered on the looking-glass of the coffee-room, with an avant-guard of inverted ale-glasses, and deal pipe-matches.

A perfect stranger might have been led to imagine that he was in the company of the principal stars in the theatrical hemisphere by the ponderous decision with which they delivered themselves of their opinions upon theatrical affairs. *They* were the men to pull up the drama, which is so fast settling into the low-water mud of unpopularity, but the managers never gave them the chance; *they* knew Shakespeare was stifled by the monopoly of false eminence, and only wanted their assistance to come round again to his former position; *they* knew a man in the country to whom Kean was a supernumerary, whom conflicting interests, and wheels within wheels, kept from London; and were well aware that it was in the provinces alone talent could be secured. But by those experienced in their usual style of conversation, a tolerably correct notion of their different physiologies was soon formed. The individual who hinted that the piece about to

be produced was a very indifferent one, was certain to be cast for "Charles, his friend," instead of "Sir Harry Dashley, a young baronet;" he was the heavy light-comedian, beyond all doubt. He who spoke perpetually of the great houses he used to bring as first tragedian in the country, was a provincial who had found his level on the metropolitan boards, exchanging Hamlet for Osrick, and Glo'ster for Catesby. And he who saw nothing in the way in which any regular favourite played a character so as to attain unusual popularity, had tried the same part, and failed therein.

In the drama, as in literature, a person who stands in no one's way, unheeded by, and unknown to the world, beyond bearing the repute of harmless mediocrity, will ever be warmly praised and complimented by his colleagues; but, let him attain the most infinitesimal share of popularity, and that success will be his damning crime. He will fall at once from the genius to the humbug. Whoever is acquainted with members of either of these two professions, and, possibly, with all the others, will know at

once that the leading objects of their admiration are men, concerning whose abilities the great mass reckon in an inverse ratio: and that, on the other hand, the favourites of the million are, with them, mere impostors.

Mr. Fogg, accompanied by Vincent, and the ever-gay Jollit, entered the house, and proceeded up stairs to the private room belonging to the club. There were eight or ten members assembled, by whom Scattergood was courteously received upon his introduction; and they took their places at the table.

“What, ho! there!” cried Mr. Fogg, as the waiter was quitting the room.

“Marry, two goes of gin; and with what speed you may.”

“I hope, Foggy, you mean to christen your play to-night,” said Mr. Joe Jollit. And then, without waiting for an answer, he performed a solo upon an empty pipe, in the course of which he imitated various domestic animals by drawing atmospheric air through its perforation.

“You appear to be very intimate with your friend,” said Vincent to the author.



Mr. Fogg drew his chair nearer the speaker, as if he was pulling it down to the front of the stage, and commenced: "Listen: 'tis now some five years since, one stormy winter's night—"

"I say, Fogg," interrupted a gentleman at the other end, holding up a blue-covered pamphlet, "what will you give me for this?"

"I know not what it is," answered the person addressed.

"The first copy of the last farce at the *Variétés*, my boy," replied the speaker. "Look here—*L'Amour au deuxième Etage*."

"Has it been done yet?" eagerly inquired five dramatic authors at once.

"Rather," replied the other, whose name was Bodge. "I made two translations last night with different names. I shall call the one for the Olympic 'The Two Pair Back,' and the other for the Haymarket, 'Fanchette.' It's safe to go."

"That's a remarkable man," whispered Mr. Fogg to Vincent. "He has a regular situation of a guinea a-week at one of our leading houses,

to translate every French play as it comes out; besides what he does on his own account."

"And has he much to do in that way?"

"A great deal," returned the author. "He was the first man who introduced five-shilling farces to the notice of managers; and they have patronised him ever since."

"But I should think that interfered with your interests," observed Vincent.

"By no means," answered his friend. "Mine, you see, is the true legitimate; nothing can shake it but a powerful rival. I began by writing five-act comedies, and other preparatory works, until I arrived at my present position. I pledge you."

And Mr. Fogg bowed into his glass of grog, and rose therefrom refreshed.

"Pray, silence, gentlemen," cried Mr. Joe Jollit, who appeared to be on the most intimate terms with everybody. "Order for a joke. Now, Mr. Silt, don't be nervous—try it again."

The gentleman addressed, who was an amateur actor, with light hair, and a blue

stock, who shaved off his whiskers to look like a real one, and spoke learnedly of "floats," "borders," and "first entrances," blushed very deeply.

"I can assure you, gentlemen," continued Mr. Joe, "that Mr. Silt has brought us a joke, very ancient, and in the highest state of preservation."

"A case of burke," he whispered to Mr. Fogg, and then said, with an expression of great meaning, to the company, "I hope, gentlemen, you will not interrupt Mr Silt."

"No ; it was merely this," said Mr. Silt, causing his glass to revolve on its axis, and speaking with the air of a man trying to make the company believe he thought nothing of what he was about to say, whilst in reality he considered it a crack anecdote : "it was merely this. I was going one day from Greek Street to the Quadrant—"

"I beg your pardon," asked Mr. Jollit ; "what o'clock was it ?"

"I don't exactly recollect," replied Silt ; "I should think, about one."

“Which one?” inquired another gentleman.

“Pray, order!” said Mr. Jollit. “Now, Mr. Silt, you were going with a Greek to buy a quadrant,—go on.”

“No, no; I am afraid you misunderstand me,” continued the victim, Silt: “I was going to the Quadrant to buy some cigars.”

“Ah! the Greek couldn’t speak English, I suppose. I see,” chimed in Mr. Bodge. “I knew a Greek once—”

“Really, gentlemen, you are interrupting Mr. Silt,” said Mr. Joe, mildly deprecating the diversion.

“No, no,” said Mr. Silt positively, and emphasizing every word, “I, came, from, Greek, Street, to, buy, some, cigars, in, the, Quadrant.”

“Ha! ha! capital! very good!” laughed Jollit, rapping the table; “the best story you ever told!”

And the remainder of the company joined in applauding it.

“I’m afraid we put you out,” said Mr. Bodge, politely addressing Silt.

“You have not heard it all,” answered the unsuspecting amateur, not yet put down. “The shop was kept by a Jew, where I always dealt—”

“What game did you play, then, always to deal?” inquired the chairman.

“Hush! order!” cried Mr. Jollit. “Mr. Silt was staying at Deal with a Jew. You’re losing all the point of the story. And where was the Greek all this time?”

“It’s no use; I can’t go on,” said Mr. Silt, stopping in great confusion, and turning it off by stirring his gin and water very frantically. Upon this the applause was renewed, and genius again gave way to relaxation; whilst the wag Jollit told Mr. Silt never to mind, as the joke would be sure to keep very well this cold weather, until next week, and perhaps its flavour would be improved.

“I hope, Crowle, you will give me a few lines in the paper on Sunday,” observed Mr. Fogg, confidentially, to a gentleman near him.

“Did the piece go?” asked Mr. Crowle, who had interest with the press.

“Enormously, and the leap told tremendously. By the way, allow me ; Mr. Scattergood, Mr. Crowle. — Mr. Crowle, Mr. Scattergood,” continued Mr. Fogg, introducing his friend in the double fashion common to the profession. “An influential journalist,” he whispered to Vincent, as he acknowledged the other’s bow.

“I need not go all the way to see it, I suppose,” observed Mr. Crowle.

“Oh no !” said the author ; “here is the play-bill. That,” he went on, marking part of the programme with a peculiarly stumpy pencil, “that was the great effect ; and you can say that the different people played with their usual ability.”

“All right,” replied the other, folding up the bill.

“Much obliged,” returned Mr. Fogg ; “and if you could put a spoke in the wheel of the other house whilst you are about it, it will do no harm.”

The conversation now became general ; not, however, until Mr. Silt had attempted another

slow story without effect. And at last Mr. Fogg and Vincent took their departure, accompanied by Mr. Jollit, in getting quit of whom they found some difficulty. For Mr. Fogg, delicate in mind, with a fine sense of proper pride, did not wish Joe to know the humble tenement he occupied. And he was equally sensitive on this point with respect to everybody else; so that it was the custom whenever he left the club to twit him with living in various marvellous localities, some of his friends assigning to him the dark arch in the Adelphi, and others the night-reversion of a gigantic advertising cart, on consideration of his writing poetry for the establishment.

Fortunately, a street row attracted Mr. Jollit's attention. He directly plunged into the centre of the group of disputants "to see all fair, and that the police did not exceed their duty;" and Mr. Fogg and Vincent, taking advantage of this diversion, went straight home.

As Mr. Fogg opened the door, he found that a letter, addressed to him, had been slipped underneath in his absence. After the usual

speculation as to the writer, and vainly endeavouring to decypher the post-mark, he proceeded to the best means of solving the mystery.

“An engagement!” he exclaimed, as he read it. “An engagement for six months as the house-author, in one of our first provincial theatres. I must away at dawn. The spell is broken—we must part. The steam-packet is cheap: once more to the dark and howling waters of the wild unbounded sea!”

And at the conclusion of this energetic speech he imitated a prompter’s whistle, as if the front pair of “flats” were to close in upon him; and then retired pensively to bed. And so did Vincent; but in a state of mind far less self-satisfactory, from the vague prospect which again opened before him.



## CHAPTER XIV.

THE CLOISTERS ; THE MONITORS, AND THEIR VICTIMS.

FREDDY remained for an hour unnoticed by any one, whilst the usual morning business of the school proceeded. But there was plenty to attract his attention. The boys above him on the form, which had three ascending seats, amused themselves by jerking hot wax from the candles upon his hair and clothes ; and such a perpetual exhibition of corporal punishment went on throughout all the classes, that at last the constant strokes of the canes, which echoed in the vast room, sharp and distinct as the crack of a rifle, resembled the irregular firing of a body of soldiers. The younger boys writhed and cried out in agony under the infliction ; then they were beaten again. But the elder ones made it a point of emulation

to stand the torture unflinchingly. And when the thick cane descended savagely upon their cold hand and fingers, and left a purple and burning mark behind, they pinched it between their other arm and side, to numb the hurt ; and bit their lip in defiance, until the pain was lessened, and the next stroke came, and others after that, until their hands became as callous as their minds.

At nine o'clock the simple word "Go!" from one of the masters, dissolved the school for breakfast, and there was a simultaneous rush to the cloisters. Frederick took his cap, which he had kept in his lap all the time, and followed the rest, or was rather jostled and carried down stairs by the others. The general attack was then made upon a species of watchbox under the staircase, in which an old woman was dispensing small cups of coffee at a penny, and buttered rolls at three-half-pence each. Freddy had been told something about getting his breakfast ; but he was not hungry. He was far too miserable to think of eating.

But those whose spirits allowed them to feed—which in all truth they did, and with wondrous appetites—enjoyed their breakfast in proportion to the great difficulty of obtaining it, which was an undertaking of great exertion, and fraught with much danger to the comestibles; for there was such a driving, and elbowing, and shoving, and scrambling over one another's backs and shoulders, to get at the pigeon-hole entrance, and reach over its outwork, formed by the shutter, which let down with two chains, that very few cups of coffee came safe out of the *mélée*; and some were even seen dancing high in the air, shooting up like rockets from the centre of the throng, and discharging their contents upon the heads of those below. Those who were lucky enough to secure the roll retired immediately into dark corners to eat it, amongst a set of little boys, who always shrunk into the obscure parts of the cloisters from sheer timidity.

“Oh, here you are!” exclaimed Gogsley, coming suddenly upon Frederick, and dragging

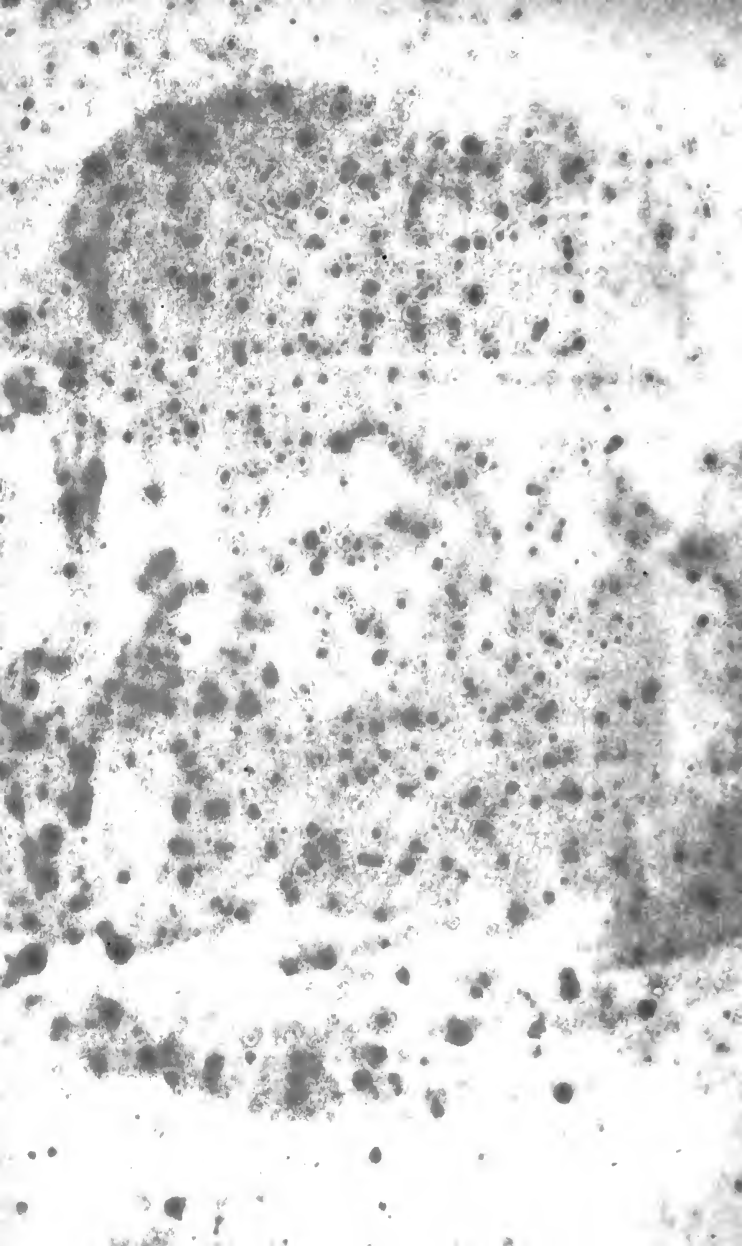
him out of his ambush. "We're looking for you. Now, you fellows, here's the new boy."

There was a general cheer, and a rush towards Frederick, and in an instant he was caught up by a dozen different hands, and his limbs pulled violently into as many directions, as his captors carried him in triumph to the end of the cloisters, and proceeded to the ceremony of installation by "bumping," turning him into a human battering-ram against one of the massive stone pillars that supported the school-room.

At last they left their unresisting victim, bruised, sprained, and crying, at the end of the cloisters. He went and sat down upon the door-sill of one of the master's robing-rooms,\* and wept bitterly. But he did not remain long undisturbed. A boy came running along the pavement with a tea-kettle, and, catching sight of Freddy, poured a little boiling water over his shoes by way of introduction, and then added,

\* It is perhaps needless to tell the old Merchant Tailors that this site is now occupied by the writing-school.





"I say, weren't you on the first form this morning?"

"Yes, sir," replied Frederick meekly, through his tears.

"My eye! won't you catch it then, that's all. You ought to be fagging in the school-room. I'd advise you to come up."

Unconscious what new style of persecution awaited him, Freddy followed the other boy up stairs, and entered the school-room, where the monitors were at breakfast before the fire, upon an *extempore* table formed by forms and the masters' foot-stools. Some of the boys were cleaning knives, others were washing tea-things, and the rest engaged in similar menial operations, calculated to have an equally beneficial effect upon young minds.

"Oh! you are the skulker, are you?" asked one of the monitors, a sullen-looking young man in a white cravat. "Hold up your face."

"Please, sir," exclaimed Frederick, "I did not know—"

"Hold up your face, sir!" exclaimed the other sharply. The terrified little boy obeyed

as a trained animal would have done, and the monitor dealt him two terrific boxes on the ear. "Now, then, make the toast," he added sharply, as Freddy pressed his hands to his cheeks, almost blistered by the assault.

It appeared far easier to give this order than to carry it into effect; for the fire-place was surrounded by a large fender, or guard, of thick iron wire, four or five feet high, and bars of the same material across the top. Frederick looked at this despairingly for a minute or two, and then ventured to ask one of the other fags, who was wiping a slop-basin, what he should do.

"You must climb up, and get inside," said the boy. "You'll find it out soon enough."

It was a large blazing fire, sufficiently fierce to have roasted a sheep at. But Frederick was compelled to take his toasting-fork, and crept inside, where he remained, scorched and smarting, until his task was accomplished. He felt completely crushed; and when he thought of home again, how differently he would be treated, and how Clara would have got him a screen, if he only hinted at the warmth, his



misery redoubled. Fright, however, made him pay great attention to his task, and he succeeded in pleasing his tormentors, for which the only return he got was a command always to make the toast in future.

The monitors finished breakfast, and what they left became the perquisites of the fags ; in the same fashion as the scraps of a feast would be given to so many animals. Before the school was called again, the boy who had taken Freddy's name down at the door, when he returned with Gogsley's imposition, came into the room.

"How many were late, Palmer?" asked the monitor.

"Only one—a new boy," replied the other, handing him a small slip of paper. "Scattergood."

"That 's your name — isn't it?" inquired the monitor, addressing Frederick.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. When the master comes in, you will go up to him and be lick'd. That 's all ; you may go."

Frederick turned away trembling, and took his seat upon the first form, where he had been placed in the morning.

“If this goes on,” he thought, “I know what I shall do. They will be very angry if I went home without leave. I shall run away.”

## CHAPTER XV.

MR. FOGG LEAVES LONDON, AND VINCENT MEETS WITH  
MR. BOLT UPON TOWER HILL.

It did not take long for Mr. Fogg to arrange affairs for his departure. The care of looking after the products of his various plays in his absence was left in the hands of the Dramatic Authors' Society, which is a pleasant institution for enjoying the luxuries of law at a small expense, subscribing to defray the costs of litigious members, and hunting country managers into corners, from which they are unable either to come out or come down,—a chase as exciting in its progress, and generally as profitable in its result, as that of a red herring.

On the afternoon following the receipt of his letter, Mr. Fogg prepared to leave the metropolis. His wardrobe was packed up in

a curiously ancient black portmanteau, similar to the one which comic travellers bring on the stage with great toil, and then sit down upon, in romantic melodramas. But, as his toilet was not very extensive, the spare room was filled up with prompters' copies of unpublished plays; two or three damned farces, to be brought out under new names in the country, or, if that failed, to be turned into dialogue stories for the magazines; and a collection of minor-theatre play-bills, with full programmes of the scenery and incidents, for the provincial typographers to copy from. The furniture and "properties" of his chamber were left in the care of the landlady of the house, who resided in the back kitchen, to which Mr. Fogg usually descended as if he bore a torch to soft music. And then, about six in the evening, accompanied by Vincent, (who did not perform that night, in consequence of a benefit, with a change of pieces,) he gave up the key, and left his abode; begging his hostess to bear in mind "that an interval of six months might be supposed to elapse between the departure and the return."

It was dark when they got to London Bridge, where the steamboat, in whose fore-cabin Mr. Fogg was to voyage to Yarmouth, was lying. But there was a great deal of bustle ; for a large foreign boat had just arrived, and was discharging her load upon the lighters ; and heavy porters came pressing forward, with “ By your leave,” which they took without waiting for an answer ; and foreign gentlemen, in remarkable caps, clinging to leather hat-boxes, as though all that was dear to them in existence was inclosed therein, vandyked with indecision about the quay, as they tried to recollect the name of the hotel in the “ Place de Lester-square,” to which they had been recommended, and to see if it was the same as the various touters on the wharfs assured them it was.

Vincent went on board with Mr. Fogg, to stay with him until the bell rang to go on shore ; and the author forthwith took possession of his berth ; all of which resting-places together had somewhat the appearance of a double row of continuous Punch’s shows, both as regarded size and drapery, which was of that popular

blue check familiar to the public. And, indeed, after Mr. Fogg had been inducted to his roosting-place by the steward's assistant, whom he called "box-keeper," he found that the attitude he was compelled to assume therein resembled that of the facetious puppet, when thrown into convulsions by the appearance of the ghost, previously to informing his usual medical attendant that he was very bad to-morrow.

"You will write to me, I hope," said Mr. Fogg. "I shall be anxious to hear how you get on, and what you are doing. I will send you up the play-bills, and then you will know where I am located."

"I should be very glad to come to you," returned Vincent; "for I do not see what I shall do in London, especially when you are gone. I appear to be as badly off as the night I first came up to town."

"Take comfort, sir, and hope a better day," continued the author. "You are entitled to my lodgings until Wednesday; for I have paid up until then. And, after that, never drowse your toplights, but brace up your fore-

sail-halyards against the breakers of misfortune, and drop hope's anchor in the haven of happiness, which ever assists the bold mariner, who never says die. Ah!" resumed Mr. Fogg, reverting from the present to the retrospective, "I remember when that speech used to get three rounds. Those were the palmy days for the Shaksperian nautical drama!"

At length the voice of one of the crew shouted down stairs, "Now, who 's for shore?" in a manner that shewed the question was not to be trifled with, unless people wished to be carried off against their intentions. Vincent shook Fogg warmly by the hand, and the author was no less hearty in his farewell; for he had the heart of an infant, despite his love of the terrible. And he even made a slight allusion to the state of his lee-scuppers, for so he called his eyes, as he parted from his friend; whilst the other left the steamer, and remained upon the wharf until it had cast loose its moorings, or whatever they were, and moved away down the river.

It was soon out of sight in the dark evening,

and then Vincent, when he could watch it no more, turned away. Nor did he find until this moment that even the simple-hearted dramatist, who painted life without knowing it, and abounded in the milk of human kindness, whilst he revelled in the blood of unnatural ferocity,—that this unit in the last census, by his departure, had left a void too large for the remaining millions to fill up, who were bustling about, and crossing each other's path, like so many ants, around him.

There is no solitude so terrible and dreary as that felt in the very heart of a vast, unsympathizing city,—nothing that gives an idea of utter and chilling loneliness so forcibly as being surrounded by crowds who know you not, nor have one feeling or one interest in common with your own. In the wilderness of nature, the solitary island, the deep tranquil forest, or even the dismal and trackless desert, where but a few harsh and arid plants alone thrust their thirsty heads above the sand to drink the night-dews, there is still companionship. Every product of the earth, every minute



living thing that creeps upon it, or murmurs on its course through the air, holds converse with our mind, and in some measure becomes a part and parcel of our being. But in the peopled city, all around us bears an alien aspect; we dare not therein look for company. There is no more fellowship in the hearts of those we meet than in the flinty pavement they traverse. Their very presence estranges those things from us in which—alone—we might perhaps find a mute sympathy, and teaches us they exist not for ourselves, but for others.

Bitterly feeling these hard truths, Vincent turned away from the wharf, and, perfectly heedless of going in any particular direction, wandered along Thames Street, until he came to Tower Hill; and, as he strolled over its open space, lost himself in a tangled labyrinth of plans and speculations, each one to be put aside by that which followed it, until his ideas got into such an inextricable mass of confusion, that with an effort he dismissed the elaboration of the subject altogether; and, lighting

his pipe—his usual resource when perplexed or irritated—he walked rapidly backwards and forwards along the edge of the moat, endeavouring to wear away his mental anxiety by bodily energy, to tranquillize himself, if not by philosophy and self-reasoning, at least by exhaustion.

There are few places in England which preserve so perfectly the aspect of an old continental town as Tower Hill and its surrounding buildings, when viewed through the medium of moonlight, sufficiently tempered to wrap its more prominent objects in semi-obscurity, whilst at the same time it permits the general outline of the fortifications to be visible. The irregular buildings of the fortress itself, with lights gleaming from small windows high in air, and dim oil lamps flickering at wide intervals on different portions of the outworks,—the open expanse of the hill, with its borders of trees before the houses, forming a rude species of boulevard, assist in completing the picture; and so Vincent thought, as he gazed listlessly around him. Every now and then the roll of

a drum from the interior echoed along the ramparts, followed by the challenge of a sentinel ; and occasionally indistinct sounds of music and revelry broke from some of the taverns, where a few mariners had assembled from their vessels in the pool, to make merry, and get rid of their hard-earned payments as speedily as might be. But beyond this there was little noise ; for Tower Hill is not a great thoroughfare, and towards evening is comparatively deserted, except by those whose interests lie within its precincts.

As Vincent Scattergood leant against the rails, and ruminated as he smoked, his eye fell upon a little knot of people who had collected against the railings of Trinity Square, and from whom bursts of laughter occasionally broke upon the general stillness, as they apparently listened to the harangue of a man, before whom a red glaring light was burning, which threw its shadows, not altogether unpicturesquely, upon the assembled throng. As he was in the humour to seize upon any incident, however trifling, that might divert his

feelings, he drew towards the assembled loiterers, and was soon astonished at discovering that an old acquaintance of his own was the object of attraction.

For there, in front of a small covered vehicle, something resembling those driven by the Holloway and Dulwich carriers, elevated upon a platform laid across the shafts, which were raised to a level by a rough trestle of rustic workmanship, stood Mr. Cricket, otherwise, and in worldly intercourse, Bolt. He was haranguing the assembled crowd in praise of the wares which stocked the interior of his small vehicle, and this was a sort of bazaar upon wheels, so numerous were its articles for sale. Indeed, by looking at them, it would have been a point of great difficulty to have told precisely to what species of British manufacture Mr. Bolt especially confined his mercantile exertions; for there were waistcoats and memorandum-books, guns, handkerchiefs, and two-foot rules; tea-trays, saws, and writing-paper; pewter spoons, shaving-boxes, and pocket tool-chests in such profusion, that the

cart, which was called the "Noah's Ark," really carried out its name, as being especially constructed to hand specimens of everything down to posterity. He was speaking as Vincent approached his rostrum; and, not caring to interrupt him before his listeners, our hero joined the group, and paid attention, along with the rest, to his harangue.

"Now, come nearer," said Mr. Bolt, "and then you won't be quite so far off: there's good people. You buy as slowly as lawyers go to heaven, and that takes a long time for 'em to do. My father was a lawyer, and went aloft in a hackney coach. He's been on the road six months, and hasn't got half way there yet. Now, why don't you buy this teapot?"

"Because we haven't got the money," replied a rash spectator, who directly afterwards was very sorry he had spoken.

"I should say so," observed Mr. Bolt. "You look as if you couldn't lay out a shilling without giving your pocket a fortnight's notice of it. I could get rid of my cargo twice as quick

in Sheffield, where they come from ; for, if they haven't got the money to buy there, they've got the pluck to steal, and you've got neither. Well—you're partikler. I'll knock you down with the butt-end of my nonsense now, though, before I've done with you."

And Mr. Bolt, retiring to the mysterious depths of his caravan, came forward armed with half-a-dozen dinner-knives and forks of the best cast-iron.

"Here's a bargain for ten pounds," he cried. "They're cheaper than mackarel at a penny a dozen, and won't get bad if they're kept, which the mackarel will. I sold some like them to a great nobleman, named George, who lives across the river. He's got a farm, and keeps three tom-cats, a billy-goat, and a butterfly, to do his work. He gives my brother three guineas a-week to ride a black beetle amongst the cabbages, and hunt the slugs. If ten pounds is above your figure, take ten shillings: if this won't do, take five—four—three—two—one. Who's for 'em at one? I can sell 'em for what I like, and be a

gainer, because they don't cost me anything at first."

The knives and forks were rapidly purchased, and Mr. Bolt, seeing that they stood well in the market, took out six more.

"They were good ones I just sold," he said; "but these are better. Don't you know why? Because I have got them to sell. Buying knives is like marrying women: you ought first to try their temper. These are very good-tempered, and wouldn't cut anything so as to hurt it for the world. Perhaps you don't believe that's a lie, but it is."

In this strain did Mr. Bolt continue for some time to the great edification and delight of his listeners, who might well have conceived from his unceasing eloquence, that, coming from the manufacturing districts, he had provided himself with a pair of the best cast-iron lungs, upon very moderate terms. But at length the auction began to hang very heavily on hand, in spite of all the seller's efforts to continue it with proper spirit. He appealed to their liberality, and insulted their poverty, but alike in

vain, until his stock of patter being exhausted, even to repetition two or three times over, as well as the pockets of the bystanders, he recommended them, if they were dissatisfied with any of their bargains, not to come and make any complaints before that time to-morrow, when they would be certain not to find him; and then proclaimed the sale closed for the evening.

The people soon dispersed, and then Vincent went up and addressed the auctioneer. He was apparently in the habit of seeing so many different people, under so many various phases, that he did not at first recollect the person who addressed him, until Vincent produced the dirty public-house card which the other had given him on the night they arrived together in London.

“Why, to be sure—so it is, Mr. Vinson,” exclaimed the free-trader. “I’ve been looking forrards to hear of you this ever so long. And what’s been up since we parted co, as the saying is?”

Vincent briefly related the upshot of his



accidental meeting with Mr. Fogg, and then went on to intimate to Bolt the various indefinite notions he entertained as to what he should do next.

“I told you once,” replied the trader, “there was a living to be got in London by everybody, if they wasn’t over-particular, and know’d how to set about it.”

“You appear to have found out the way.”

“Well, I believe I have. This is about the best line of all, though.” And he continued, whilst he patted the shafts of his cart in the same manner as he would have done a favourite animal ;—“Of your honest dodges this is the one ; when you comes to the others, they’re promiscus. It’s through this you’ve heard so much of me in the Times ; not by my paid advertisements, but by their own private remarks of the gentleman as writes the whole of that wonderful paper every day, in the leading-article. I’ve often thought how uncommon ’cute with his pen that codger must be. Halloo, Sam !”

This last remark was addressed to a human

being, from whose appearance it would have been difficult to tell whether he was a convict or a charity-boy, and whom Vincent had hitherto looked upon as a sack, as he lay coiled up asleep in the back of the waggon. He started from his sleep as he was called, and rubbing his large, dull eyes, awaited Mr. Bolt's orders.

"Now, look sharp, old Ten-stone-and-a-half," said the master. "Shut up the shop; and let me find it off the Commercial Road to-morrow.—What do you mean to do with yourself to-night?" he added, turning to Vincent.

"Nothing: I am ready and willing to do anything."

"Then come with me," answered the other; and if we do not find anything for you at once, I'll show you where you may at another time."

So speaking, Mr. Bolt confided the Noah's Ark to the care of the assistant, and accompanied by Vincent, proceeded across Little Tower Hill.

## CHAPTER XVI.

FREDERICK SCATTERGOOD RUNS AWAY FROM MERCHANT  
TAILORS'.

THE first fortnight passed away without any diminution of the persecuting tyranny to which the little boy was subjected at the public school. Every morning brought with it the unrelenting cruelty of the monitors; every day the indiscriminating chastisement to which he was subject. He was fagged in the school-room during the hours that he was at the mercy of his superior fellows; he was bullied in the cloisters by the other boys—even by those younger than himself, who seeing his quiet and inoffensive disposition, played off any cruelties upon him that their evil spirits suggested; and at home, or rather at Mr. Snap's, he was

driven about by Gogsley upon the most menial errands.

He wrote home, but it was generally upon the sly, creeping down in the dreary gloom of early morning, before the others had risen, or sitting upon the steps of warehouses as he went to school, that he might not be seen. For the others read his letters, and made merry with the contents, adding occasionally post-scripts of their own, or taunting him afterwards with the homely expressions of feeling and affection which he gave utterance to therein. But, lacking power to paint the troubles he underwent in their true light, his epistles were received by his family as the natural products of a boy's discomfort at going to school for the first time; and, regarded merely in the abstract, produced only replies meant, in all love, to be consolatory, that Easter would soon arrive, and that every day he would be happier. And when he hinted at wishing to come home—if for ever so short a time, a Sunday afternoon, or an hour or two on the usual half-holidays allowed by the school, the fear of his mother that

such a visit would but unsettle him the more upon his return (in which opinion Mr. Scattergood always warmly coincided, to save being asked for his own), made him the more wretched, as it took away the brightest hope he cherished.

It was a custom with several of the boys who left the afternoon-school earlier than the others, according to the order in which they were called up to be heard, to go and play upon the wharfs in the neighbourhood of Suffolk Lane, joining in hide-and-seek amongst the casks, making up-and-downs with the timber, or assisting the men to unload such things as they could carry from the barges; and sometimes they joined in the more dangerous pastime, when the lighters were empty, of chasing their fellows from one to the other, running along the gunwales, and leaping over the intervening spaces. A party of boys from one of the neighbouring free-schools were in the habit, also, of assembling at the same place, and this led to frequent collisions between the two parties, with all the acerbity of the “gown

and town "rows pertaining to a more advanced academical career, until open war was proclaimed between the public-school-boys and the "blackguards," as the others were termed by the pupils of Merchant Tailors'. And at last *mêlées* and single combats daily took place in all the courts and lanes surrounding the school ; and the single partisan of either clan, caught by himself, had a sorry reception.

There is a peculiar festival held at Merchant Tailors' School, termed "Probation Day." It is chiefly dedicated to breaking the windows of the school-room, cutting the book-straps of the little boys, pouring ink over their heads, or spluttering it upon their lay-down collars, and devouring a particular sort of sausage-roll, manufactured expressly for the occasion. It is also a day of commercial speculation, coupled with the comfortable prospect of certain profits to the heads of the academy, who become for the time being retail stationers, and sell copy-books of humble value to their pupils for a shilling a-piece. In these are written Latin and Greek exercises, which become the sole

property of oblivion, wherein also the copyright is vested. And on those especial days less faith than usual appears to be placed in the school-clock, which keeps time below the imposing arms, with their rampant dromedaries, at the end of the room, and their very appropriate motto, "*Parvæ res concordîâ crescunt*," or, in proper vernacular, "Nine tailors make a man;" for the clock is then completely out of favour, and a silver hour-glass is introduced, which performs gymnastic feats upon the headmaster's desk, tumbling head over heels at stated intervals, (announced by the rap of a hammer, similar to those used by chairmen of convivial taverns, and auctioneers in the Poultry,) before the time of day is given out in wonderfully elaborate mouthfuls of words, which complicate the simple period "three o'clock" into "*horâ tertiâ et ultimâ pomeridianâ*." Legends, impressed upon the juvenile pupils with due gravity, go to prove that this hour-glass is in the yearly habit of laying a number of egg-boilers, which are disposed of through the medium of the wheels of Fortune, at the lounges

of Lowther and Tulley; and the gigantic ancestor of the whole race is shown to awe-struck freshmen, sculptured in stone on an immense scale, and elevated in front of a public-house for the sale of Calvert's Entire, which, situated on the southern side of Upper 'Thames Street, appears in solitary majesty to watch over the time misspent in the opposite Suffolk Lane.

The real importance of this day is not known: when it is over, the books are collected, and are apparently seen no more. But the scholars evidently think it one of great toil and unpleasantry; for no sooner has the last orison of the evening prayers fallen from the lips of the boy whose duty it is to repeat them for the day, than its echoes are crushed by a loud and long huzza, in lieu of response, which resounds for some minutes through the courts and startled warehouses of the vicinity, arresting the passengers, who look up towards the school-room windows for a solution of the mystic noise, and are greeted in return by showers of broken glass from the book-assailed case-



ments, and in another moment by the outburst of whooping, turbulent youths from the interior.

Probation Day was over, and Frederick Scattergood went down to the wharfs to play with some of his fellows in the interval between the close of the school and tea-time at the Reverend Mr. Snap's. The boys, who had broken forth like so many caged animals, were elate with the conclusion of their labours ; and, upon arriving at the water-side, finding that some of the free-school lads had taken possession of the tubs and bales amongst which they usually played, prepared to eject them. The others, entertaining different ideas upon the subject, resisted the attack, and in two minutes both parties were engaged in a regular contest.

Some of the younger and more timid boys took to flight at the commencement of the hostilities, and amongst them was Frederick ; but, just as he was running out of the gateway leading from the wharf, he was met by a party of the antagonists ; and, driving him into a

corner, they immediately set upon him in a very savage and cowardly manner, striking him about the head and face, until his upper lip and ears were covered with blood. It was perfectly useless attempting to resist them. He shielded himself from their attacks as long as he was able, and at last seizing upon an opportunity, darted off towards the river, with the whole pack huzzaing and shouting at his heels. Scared almost out of his senses, he ran down a plank, used by the men who were unlading, on to one of the barges. The free-school boys followed him, now more delighted at the extreme terror of their victim, than anxious to beat him. The poor little fellow scrambled from one barge to the other, until he came to the last of those which lay together, when, running along the edge of it to reach a spot where some of the Merchant Tailors had collected in triumph, having beaten off their adversaries, his foot slipped, and he tumbled over head and ears into the water.

In an instant the alarm was given, and the boys, ceasing their hostilities, crowded to the

edge of the river, calling loudly for help ; for the tide was running down very fast, and Frederick was being already 'carried into the current, now struggling, and throwing his arms out for assistance, and the next moment sinking beneath the surface. Fortunately there was a man at work in a boat by the side of one of the lighters, and he directly put off after him, and succeeded before another minute had elapsed in saving him, returning to the wharf amidst the cheers of the boys, who had forgotten all their quarrels in the excitement of the accident.

But the mirth was of very short duration. One of the masters, who had received intelligence of the uproar on the wharf when it first began, had hastened down to the water-side, determined to stop it. He arrived there just as poor Freddy was taken from the boat, dripping wet, and still bleeding ; for the bath had been insufficient to wash away the results of the chastisement he had received. Ascertaining that the accident had been the result of a conflict with the lads of the free-school,

and no doubt looking upon little Scattergood as the ringleader, he took down his name, and, ordering the rest of the boys to disperse, told Frederick to get home and seek fresh clothing directly, and bear in mind that he should expect to see him at school on the next morning that it opened.

“Well,” said Gogsley to him that evening, as the boarders were once more assembled round Mr. Snap’s hearth, “I would not change places with you for a week’s holiday. You won’t have an inch of skin left on your back. Don’t he cut deep when he has a mind?—that’s all.”

“I was not fighting at all,” replied Frederick. “It was in trying to get away that it happened.”

“Oh, yes, of course: you are always innocent; I should think so,” said Gogsley. “Hold out your hand for telling crams.”

“No, I won’t,” answered Frederick, for once revolting against such continued bullying, and putting both his hands in his pockets.

“You won’t!” observed Gogsley; “very

well." And gravely taking his handkerchief from his pocket, he twisted it into a thong, and tied it in the middle in a double knot.

"Now, come here," he continued, when these preparations for torture were completed. "Cashbox, hold down his head."

This order was given to young Jollit, who was too much in dread of Gogsley, not to obey him immediately.

"Hold it down lower," cried the tyrant, "and make his clothes tight. Now, then—one, two, three—fire!"

At the last word he struck Freddy so violently with the knot, that a scream of pain broke from the victim, so loud, as to make his persecutor desist, for fear of alarming Mr. Snap.

"That will make you speak the truth," said Gogsley. "Now, leave off blubbering, or else I shall lick you again. Do you hear me?—leave off, I say."

"I'd recommend you to put a copy-book up your back," said Plunkett, "if you can't stand fire better than that; for you will be sure to

catch it pretty tidily at the school. Rasper bought such a bundle of thick canes yesterday !”

“Canes !” said Gogsley ; “he won’t get off so easily. You’ll be birched ; I suppose you know that ; and have bits cut right out of you.”

The arrival of bed-time put a stop to this ingenious course of torture. But Frederick did not go to sleep. In an agony of pain, excitement, and terrible anticipations, until he lay fevered and quivering in the bed, provoking endless remonstrances and cuffs from Plunkett for his restlessness, he heard every quarter from the gloomy chimes of St. Paul’s for the greater part of the night. He knew what a severe punishment awaited him if he remained ; and yet he did not dare to go home, because he was certain that his father would send him back again directly. At last he determined to run away,—he scarcely could tell whither, but stay at the school any longer he would not.

The next day was a holiday, but the pupils were allowed by Mr. Snap to go out in the afternoon. There was a mountebank exhibiting

in one of the small thoroughfares near the house, and the boys stopped to look at him. This attracted their attention, and Frederick, taking advantage of it, crept through the crowd, slipped up an adjoining court, and was soon out of their sight.

He ran quickly along two or three lanes, until he found himself at the Mansion House. And now which way was he to go? He had only threepence in his pocket, his weekly allowance, which had just been given to him, and this would not help him much upon any road. Whichever way he journeyed must be on foot. At last he recollected when his family lived in Essex, that he used to come to town along Whitechapel whenever they visited London; and this decided him upon going in that direction. Vague enough, to be sure, were his ideas of the country beyond that thoroughfare; but, next to Boulogne, there was no other direction in which he knew a soul. Indeed, with him these two localities were the world.

The clock struck three as he started off along Cornhill. It was a fine bright afternoon :

warm, too, for the time of year. People had left their great-coats at home for the first time, and walked about with cheerful faces. Gay ribbons and light fabrics in the windows of the drapers peeped out from amongst the more sober articles, like snowdrops from the dull, wintry ground. Weathercocks gleamed in the sunlight against the blue sky; long trucks of crisp fragrant heath and tinted daisies, redolent of country odours, appeared to supplant the sickly hyacinths on the window-sills. Travelers forsook the interiors of omnibuses, and climbed the roof, to the great joy of the drivers, legended to pocket all fees therefrom derived. Frugal housekeepers began to think of letting their fires out in the middle of the day, and dreamt of coloured willow shavings and elaborate dissections of many-nicked silver paper, to the great detriment of that trade which Mr. Chicksand affected to be a wholesale speculator in. Everything appeared looking forward to the spring; and perhaps everything turned out very delusive, even the next morning, as pleasant anticipations usually do.



Freddy felt at liberty, but at the same time terrified at his freedom ; he was as embarrassed as a loose canary ; and when he collected sufficient courage to ask a waterman at a cab-stand the way to Whitechapel, and the waterman looked at him with a glance which none but ogres in story-book woodcuts ever have been known to assume, with the exception of the terrible Turks who roll their eyes in moveable magic-lantern slides, and said, “ he hoped as he wasn’t the little boy that all the newspapers said had run away from school,” he was so frightened, that he determined at all risks to pursue his indefinite journey as well as he could by guessing, rather than again submit to such a thrilling intimation.

He remembered the butchers’ sheds in the High Street ; because, when a very little boy, he used to gaze at them from the coach-windows as he came into London, and wondered whether there were enough people in the world to eat all the legs of mutton that hung in endless rows from their penthouses. So this assured him that he was going in the right

direction ; and he walked on and on, until the road widened, and the footpath became broad and unpaved, towards which houses pushed out shops from their ground-floors ; and here and there little bits of dirty turf, which had been apparently planted with birch-brooms pulled to pieces, tried to look like gardens. Then came a tract of country covered with nothing else but almshouses and hospitals, sometimes broken by a dingy enclosure of mouldy grass, “to let on a building lease,” in the centre of which a dismal cow was gradually starving ; next, more rows of dwellings, with a public-house at each extremity ; and then again fields, larger and broader, with attempts at trees and hedges, but still encompassed by formal rows of buildings, warehouses with open walls, letting in the air upon unknown productions, and chimneys from which black smoke was vomited continually. Sundays, week-days, or holidays—morning, noon, and night, it came forth just the same.

The afternoon was declining as he reached Bow, and the sun was throwing its latest beams

upon the tower of the old church, before it retired for the night beneath the orange-coloured vapour that hung over London. And now, for the first time, Frederick began to consider what he was to do when night came. He was already rather tired ; not so much so but he could have walked some miles further, if needed ; still he knew that he must ultimately knock up, and then where was he to look for shelter ? He had not money enough to procure a bed. Indeed, if he had possessed sufficient, he would have been afraid of applying for one.

He was getting hungry, too. His persecutions and misery had taken away his appetite at dinner, but the walk had restored it with double sharpness ; so, after dusting his shoes, that attention might not be called to them, he ventured into a chandler's shop, and purchased a small piece of cheese. He thought the woman who served him looked suspiciously at him, as if, in fact, she was perfectly aware that he had come that afternoon from school, and was going on with very undefined notions

of his journey. He next bought a roll at an adjoining baker's, and, keeping both these things in his pocket, he picked pieces off and eat them as he went along, which diverted him until he reached Stratford, where the road divided.

It was now nearly dusk, and he was perfectly undecided which thoroughfare to follow. There were direction-posts to each ; but it was too dark to see them, and he was afraid to ask anybody where either of them led to ; so that, in great trouble, he sat down upon the stonework of the churchyard rails, and almost cried for very perplexity.

He began to think that he had done very wrong in leaving the school, and wondered what they were doing at that moment at Mr. Snap's, and how the discovery of his flight had affected the establishment. Then he supposed they would send home to see if he was there, — perhaps they had done so already. And what trouble that would put them in, not knowing where he was ! Poor Clara, who was always so kind to him, and his mother. Oh ! it was very terrible !

He would have gone back ; but the dread of being taken again to the quarters he had just quitted drove the idea from his mind. He must go on, but whither ? How comfortable, he thought, everybody around him appeared ; for they all knew where they were going to sleep. Even the old woman at the fruit-stall close to the inn must have somewhere, however humble the lodging was, to go to ; and the man who was cleaning the omnibus before the door was sure of a truss of hay in the loft, if he had nothing else. Next he formed a plan of getting inside the omnibus when it got quite dark, and staying there all night. But soon the horses were led out, and harnessed to it ; and, after it had loitered in front of the inn for half an hour, to the great edification of the solitary passenger, who had been assured that it was going directly, it started off for town.

At length the little boy got up again, and pursued his way, taking the left-hand road upon the decision of his remaining penny, with which he tossed heads and tails, to see which route

was best for him to follow ; and, getting nervously excited, he propounded oracular questions to himself respecting the successful termination of his enterprise, taking his answers from the first names or letters he saw over the shops.

“ Shall I be happy by to-morrow morning ? ” he inquired. “ If the first letter on the next shop is O, that shall mean *no* ; and if it is an S, *yes*.” He got up to the shop, and looked at the name : it was Wood ; and this discomfort of his own creating depressed him more than anything else. But he went on with desperation, biting his under lip, and clenching his hand until his nails left their marks deeply impressed upon his small palms.

When he got to Leytonstone, lights were gleaming from the windows of the different dwellings, and through some of them he caught glimpses of people comfortably seated at tea in snug parlours. The public-houses, too, looked cheerful, as the bright fires within shone through their red blinds. He was exceedingly thirsty with worry, and somewhat fatigued, and he ventured into one of them for half a

pint of porter, which cost him his remaining coin.

“ You look pale, little master,” said the landlord, who was a good-tempered-looking man, with a green cut-away coat and a red face—a perfect mixture of the natural and conventional host. “ Aren’t you well ? ”

“ Yes, sir,” replied Freddy, forcing a smile, and trying to look pleasant. “ I ’m very well, only a little tired. I ’ve walked from London.”

“ And where are you going to ? ” asked the man.

This was a terrible question to answer. Freddy looked down upon the ground as his face turned scarlet, and crumpling up the corner of his jacket into his hand, said in a low, tremulous voice, “ that he was going home.” Little people have a great deal of art, but never the tact to conceal it.

“ I fear they don’t expect you to-night exactly,” observed the landlord gravely. “ Whereabouts is your home ? ”

“ Romford,” answered the little boy, hazard-

ing one of the few names he knew in the county.

“ Well, but this is not the road to Romford, you know,” replied the other ; “ this goes to Wanstead. How did you get here ? ”

“ I ’m afraid I mistook the way, sir,” said Frederick, with great humility.

“ Ah ! I ’m afraid you have,” observed the landlord, shaking his head. “ Wait a minute ; I think there ’s a cart in my yard going to Romford before long. I ’ll go and see ; and if there is, the man shall take you.”

The host left the bar, and went into the tap-parlour, where several people were drinking. The instant his head was turned, Frederick stayed no longer, but slipped out of the door, and ran up the road as fast as his legs would carry him.

He sped on until he was out of breath, and then he ventured to look around him. He had left the town, and was getting into the open country. It was starlight, and he could see that he was coming near what was apparently a forest. Under other circumstances he would



have been afraid to venture alone, and at evening, upon its outskirts ; but his alarm at being found out, and sent back to Mr. Snap's, — never reflecting that such a thing could not occur unless by his own information,—drove him on to seek refuge in its coverts. He struck out of the road to the right ; and, neglecting in his anxiety to study any objects that might lead him back again, in five minutes had completely lost his way amidst a wilderness of large trunks of trees, holly-bushes, and evergreen shrubs.

Fear, however, now regained its ascendancy, and as soon as he perceived his situation he cried aloud. There was no answer ; a dull echo followed the sound of his voice, and then nothing was heard but the gurgling of a little spring that tumbled over some pebbles almost at his feet. There was just light enough for him to distinguish a hollow and large beech-tree close to where he had stopped ; and creeping into the trunk, he coiled himself up like a dormouse. He was concealed ; of that there was no doubt. But where was he ? In the

middle of a forest, which his imagination conjured into one of those shocking woods where young princes and ruined merchants always got lost on the same night they left their homes, before discovering some wonderful castles inhabited by beasts, white cats, or sleeping-beauties. In the middle of such a forest ; at night, and alone !

Anon the terrible usurped the place of the fairy interest with which he endowed it. He thought of sad murders that had been committed, where the bodies had been buried beneath a tree, which became the haunt of unholy spirits ever after, and threw its scathed and blasted limbs on high, as if appealing to heaven to lay open the dreadful secret it inclosed amidst its roots. Then he thought that this was just such a tree, without bark or leaves, with long, gaunt branches ; perhaps there might have been a murder there—who could tell ? and the body was rotting beneath him. Some of the evergreens, too, as they bent their topmost branches to the night-breeze against the star-lit sky, looked like the wailing ghosts of





the departed. And next came back a keen recollection of the only corpse he had ever seen, that of an old servant, who had died when he was very little ; and he fancied a piece of withered timber lying on the ground a little way off looked like it. He called back the dreary sight in all its terrible particulars. The curtains drawn, and the obscure light of the room, so awfully imbued with the presence of the dead ; how he was told to touch the body, that it might not frighten him at night ; how cold and strange it felt ! And how, in spite of the precaution, it always appeared with the dusk before him ; how long it lay by his side in bed, as he quailed and shivered beneath the clothes at the grim phantom ; and how dreadful a thing death was, that changed a being he had loved to his most shocking punishment. All these ideas rose before him in frightful images, and well-nigh turned his brain with terror. They were not the spectres of the imagination. He saw them palpably, hideously before him. There was not a shrub or pollard but appeared, in the gloom, endowed with some appalling semblance.

Gradually, however, their forms became less distinct, as intense fatigue usurped the place of terror, and he fell into that state between waking and sleeping, when the attributes of either condition are equally confused one with the other. He thought he was at home, and yet it was in the middle of the forest ; and Clara spoke to him in the tree, so plainly, that he started to hear her. And suddenly Gogsley laid hold of him, and pulled him along the roof of the school to the very edge, where he let him fall ; upon which he awoke suddenly in affright. But at last everything faded away ; and, worn out with fatigue and apprehension, he became alike heedless of cold, hunger, or fear, and fell fast asleep.

## CHAPTER XVII.

WHICH REVERTS TO THE CHICKSAND COLONY, AND ITS  
INMATES.

IF there was one day more than another upon which Mrs. Chicksand gave way to the ebullitions of an irritable temperament, it was on Monday mornings, when she ascended with Lisbeth into her own room, and made a hay-cock of dirty things in the middle of it; at the same time constructing a statistical table, or "list to be retained," by entering the articles in a printed book, chiefly remarkable for containing the names of everything nobody ever wore or used; or accompanying the process by a running commentary, from which listeners, had there been any, might have gleaned much information relative to the social economy of her lodgers.

"Why, my goodness, what is that?" ex-

claimed Mrs. Chicksand, as Lisbeth, after diving into a large ticking-bag, until she was almost as completely hidden in it as a bee in a blue-bell, pulled out a round towel, and sent it across the room, like a flying serpent, towards the heap.

“That makes four this week ’m,” replied Lisbeth; “I told Mr. Bodle you’d be in a way about it.”

“Mr. Bodle must amuse himself by sweeping his own chimney with my towels,” said Mrs. Chicksand. “What can make them in such a mess?”

“He’s trying to turn all the black-lead into diamunts,” replied the handmaiden.

“Diamonds, indeed!” exclaimed Mrs. Chicksand, with a toss of her head. “I wish he’d turn a little money into his pockets, instead. Well, of all the dirty—filthy—no, I never did! Diamonds, indeed! Mr. Bodle will never make anything else but a great fool of himself. I did say I never would have professionals to lodge with me again; and, when he goes, I never will.”

And at that instant Mrs. Chicksand made



an inward vow that the following week she would charge Mr. Bodle with two-pennyworth of milk he had never had, to balance her expenditure. She had learned this clever piece of domestic economy from her father, who once kept a large hotel, and made it a rule whenever anything was broken which he did not get paid for, to charge his inmates all round with a sheet of writing-paper the next day, which, by thus retailing a quire, covered the loss. Mrs. Chicksand was a worthy descendant of this talented man. It was wonderful what a lot of watercresses Mr. Snarry devoured during the summer, without knowing it. And, independently of Mr. Bodle's endeavours to establish diamond-mines in the black-lead box, had he given himself up entirely to smelting iron-ore in blast furnaces, the sixpenny scuttles would not have told up more fearfully than they did, whenever his account got a few days past recollection.

“Bless me!” cried Mrs. Chicksand, as Lisbeth added another article to the heap, “why, what the goodness is that?”

“Them’s ink, ma’am,” replied the servant, holding up a counterpane, which looked as if it had been used as blotting-paper to a very large letter. “That’s Mr. Bodle again—writing in bed.”

“And how dares Mr. Bodle write in bed?” resumed Mrs. Chicksand. “How dares he do it?”

“I told him you’d make a noise,” said Lisbeth. “He says he must, because he has moments of perspiration. He’s been at it again.”

And in corroboration, Lisbeth displayed a pillow-case, upon which was the undeniable impression of some remarkable theme with variations, intended at some future time to astonish the week wires of the six-octave square.

“This decides me, then,” said Mrs. Chicksand wrathfully, venting her anger upon the list she was completing, by running her steel pen through it.

“I have never had my things in such a state before since Mr. Brooks had the second floor—

that gentleman who walked the hospitals, and ran in debt."

"One, two, three, four," said Lisbeth, counting up some towels. "I've heard master talk of him, ma'am."

"A troublesome fellow!" continued the mistress. "I've known him forget to undress himself, and go to bed in his boots twice running. He went away at last, but we'd a world of trouble to get rid of him."

"Had you, now, 'm?" asked the servant, who perceived Mrs. Chicksand was suffering from an accession of communicativeness, which excitement generally induced.

"I rather think we had," replied Mrs. Chicksand: "let me see—four towels. He gave a party the evening before he left, and his friends stay'd all night. When they went in the morning, they rammed bits of tobacco-pipes into all the keyholes of the house."

"Dear me!" observed Lisbeth, with an expression of alarm. "And how did the other families get out of their rooms?"

"There it was," said Mrs. Chicksand;

“they couldn’t. Mr. Chicksand was obliged to go for the fire-escapes, and let them down into the street out of the windows. I never shall forget it as long as I’m born—no, I never shall. What capital things those escapes are when a house isn’t on fire !”

The enumeration of washables had nearly concluded, and Lisbeth gathered them up into one enormous bundle, to be kicked down stairs before her into the passage, and there wait until the man called.

“Now, mind what I say,” remarked the mistress. “I won’t have Mr. Bodle take any more jack-towels to make diamonds of. If he asks for one, tell him I say that he sha’n’t have it, unless it’s to hang himself with. Then perhaps he’ll be offended, and go, Ah ! I hear you.”

The last words were playfully addressed to nothing in particular, but intended to apply to Mr. Bodle, from whose room proceeded musical sounds of an elaborated and continuous nature that showed the piano to be in the last stage of suffering, and by its violent internal grumbling led people to think involuntarily of tincture of

rhubarb, bottles of hot water, and powdered ginger.

As Mrs. Chicksand descended the staircase, Clara met her at the drawing-room door, and asked her to step in for an instant. The hostess immediately acquiesced in the wish. Mr. and Mrs. Scattergood were both from home, and Clara was a great favourite with Mrs. Chicksand, so she anticipated a long talk, which she was ever ready to indulge in.

But this conversation was not of a particularly diverting nature. After a few domestic inquiries respecting the state of the larder, and the probable store of bread in the safe, Clara told the landlady that she thought the bill might be put up again for one of the bedrooms; and she said this with such a melancholy expression, that it induced Mrs. Chicksand to hope nothing unpleasant was about to happen.

“Oh, no,” replied Clara; “at least I hope not. But I shall be able to tell you more about it when papa and mamma return.”

“Have you heard of Master Frederick lately, miss?” inquired Mrs. Chicksand.

“Oh, poor little fellow, yes,” returned Clara. “He wrote yesterday; but I am afraid he is very unhappy. It was a sad, gloomy letter, filled with wishes to come home. I must get mamma to go and see him.”

“Everybody has their troubles, miss, as I tell Mr. Chicksand, when the wooden pegs in his boots run into his heels. There’s skeletons in everybody’s houses, only they don’t show them to visitors. I’m sure I have enough to put up with.”

“I suppose your lodgers sometimes give you a little uneasiness,” observed Clara, feeling called upon to make some sort of remark.

“No living soul can tell but Mr. C. and me, no more than nothing that ever was,” answered Mrs. Chicksand. “I shall never forget the foreign gentleman, who took this very room in which we stand, and gave a reference to a high French nobleman, whose house we could not find. To think, one day he ordered a broiled

mackarel when he went out, and never came back again; but took away my husband's blue macintosh and the sugar-tongs."

"But did he not leave any luggage?" inquired Clara.

"He said it had to come through the Custom-house; but, as it never came, we suppose it was too large. And when I recollect that very day I shewed the second-floor to Mr. Snarry, with a bursting heart, at ten shillings a-week, who took the mackarel off my hands, and has occupied it ever since. A nice gentleman Mr. Snarry is, miss, and often asks about you."

"I am very much obliged to him for his attention," replied Clara. "He appears a quiet well-conducted person."

"Oh, but he's full of fun, miss; full of fun, though you wouldn't think it," replied Mrs. Chicksand, as if she thought Clara had spoken reproachfully of him. "What I says is, that you may soon know the real gentleman by what he eats," continued the landlady. "For vulgar people pinch and screw,

and starve on chops alone ; but well-born lodgers love a joint, and never see it twice."

And, delivering herself of these opinions, Mr. Chicksand released the door-handle from its five minutes of bondage in her hand, and went down stairs.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

VINCENT IS LED BY MR. BOLT TO THE EDGE OF A PRECIPICE.

IN a few minutes' time from leaving the hill, Vincent and his friend had made the journey of Tower-Ditch, as far as the thoroughfare outside the rails allowed them, and arrived at the edge of the river. They then passed some tall warehouses, which in the gloom of the evening appeared to rise to such a height that their summits were no longer perceptible, and turned into a street running parallel with the banks and wharfs of the Thames.

It was a curious locality they now entered; neither land nor water, but a chaos of both. Indeed it required a little consideration to state truly which it most belonged to. For the houses in most cases ran out into the river on piles and

embankments, built as much on the Thames as the dry ground: and the ships, in return, appeared to have forsaken their proper element, and walked over high walls into large inclosures amidst the warehouses, from which their bowsprits projected strangely over the road, as if they were about to sail forward on the land, charging and knocking down all the elevations that stood in their way.

There were numbers of odd, unnatural bridges, too, at various parts of the thoroughfare, that felt when you walked over them as if they were constructed so as to tumble down suddenly, and by dividing in the middle, let you into the dark noisome water below, without a chance of ever being seen or heard of again. Or, if you escaped this fate, there were deep and narrow spines of iron running across their entire length, to trip you up, and cut you in half when you fell down upon them. Then came more warehouses, not only in the street they were passing along, but stretching away on each side of bye-lanes, with cranes along their upper stories, which sometimes blew round in the night-wind, and looked

like so many gibbets waiting the arrival of their occupants. And the few people passing backwards and forwards were as amphibious as the quarter they traversed. In the day-time it would have been difficult to have said whether they were carmen or sailors, and at night the identification was lost altogether.

“Now, I reckon you may be trusted,” said Bolt to Vincent, as they pursued their way. “All you’ve got to do is to hear, see, and say nothing. Open your eyes, and shut your mouth, and see what we shall send you.”

Vincent promised compliance, as he wondered where the journey was to terminate. At last Bolt turned down a narrow alley between two stores, and came to the waterside, at a dilapidated hard, or landing-place, which ran out into the water from a ruinous old wharf at the back of one of the stores. He crossed a few barges that were lying off the shore, in a state of torpor, giving an occasional grunt, as if perfectly content with their heavy inactivity, when they chafed against each other; and bidding Vincent be careful where he trod, in the obscurity, at last

seized a rope, fastened to one of their tillers, and dragged a boat to the side.

"Hold hard!" he cried, in a low, hurried voice, as Vincent was about to enter it, agreeably to his commands. "Jump down into the barge. The police is coming."

He crouched down as he spoke into one of the compartments of the lighter, and Vincent followed his example. The regular sound of oars as they feathered in the rowlocks came nearer and nearer: then voices were heard close to the barge. These passed, and were again lost in the distance.

"I wonder what they're about now?" inquired Mr. Bolt, as he raised his head cautiously above the gunwale of the barge. "No good, I'm afraid. They're a bad set, them police, depend upon it."

And he said these last words with a reproving shake of his head, as if he looked upon the executive body generally as men of sinister pursuits, not to be trusted. As regarded his own affairs perhaps they were not.

As the sound of the galley died away, Vincent

descended into the boat, followed by Bolt, who took the skulls, and pulled off down the river. He did not appear anxious, however, to keep in the middle of the stream, but chose the smaller thoroughfares behind and between the rows of shipping anchored in the pool, calling Vincent's attention every now and then to different vessels, whose economy he seemed to be perfectly acquainted with.

"Do you see that schooner?" he inquired, pointing to a particular ship. "Well, if you get into any trouble within a day or two, go quietly aboard of her, and you'll be all right. She's always got that little glim alight at her stern; and so you'll know her anyhow. Keep it in mind."

At length he shot suddenly across to the Surrey side, and guided the boat towards a house at the water's-edge, at one of whose windows a candle was burning, apparently by way of signal. A sort of penthouse overhung the river but a few feet above it at high-water, and the boat was brought immediately under this. Bolt then pulled a piece of rusty chain, which hung against

one of the supports, and gave a peculiar tremulous whistle. It was repeated from above, after a moment's pause ; and then the end of a knotted rope fell down upon the boat.

"Now follow me," said Bolt. "I reckon you're a good hand at climbing ; only make sure of both your hands or your feet before you move either. Wait till I am clear up."

To follow his companion was not a task of much difficulty, and Vincent soon crept through a species of trap in the floor, and gained one of the rooms of the tenement.

It was evidently the tap-room of some low public-house that overlooked the water, with an entrance from the river-side street. Ten or twelve people, male and female, were assembled there ; some drinking, others smoking and playing cards, but all of suspicious exterior ; indeed, one or two, in the dress of pilots, with rough blue coats, and glazed "sou'-westers" were absolutely ruffianly. They stared sullenly at Vincent as he entered ; and then resumed their pipes, with the smoke from which the room was almost choked up. Some long, foreign

looking bottles, similar in appearance to that which Vincent recollected in the waggon by which he had arrived in London, stood on the table; and both the fumes of the room, and the rough appointments of the table, shewed that spirits were more patronized than beer by those who used the house.

“My friend, Mr. Vinson,” said Bolt, by way of introduction for his companion; “one of us, and no mistake.”

“Glad to see you, sir,” replied one of the guests, offering his glass. “Take a drain to our better acquaintance. I think we’ve met before.”

As Vincent took the proffered grog he recognized in its owner the driver of the waggon, whom Mr. Bolt had aided in raising the tubs of spirit from the ice, on the evening before alluded to: and he now began to see through the pursuits of the society.

“I hope the gen’l’mán is well, too, though I don’t know him, leastways as I knows on,” exclaimed another of the company, in half intoxicated accents, advancing towards him, — a

bloated-looking fellow, in the costume of a cab-stand waterman.

“What, Tubs !” cried Bolt ; “are you back again? How are you, old fireplug?”

“How ought I to be, after paying a fortnight’s visit to the mill at Coldbath Castle? and all the while I worn’t the one.”

“No; very unlucky, Tubs,” returned Bolt, in tones of mock-commiseration. “It never is the one as the police catches; it’s always the other gentleman as gets away. But how are you after your confinement?”

“Just as well as can be expected,” replied the other. “I’m afraid I took a little too much water there; that New River tap don’t do a man much good.”

“No; it’s too strong to be took by itself, I know,” replied Bolt gravely, which produced a hoarse laugh from the rest.

“I’m afeard you’re looking for a seat, sir,” continued Tubs, addressing himself to Vincent. “Here’s a bucket—my stock-in-trade I calls it—quite at your service.”

“It’s very comfortable,” said Vincent, un-



concernedly turning the bucket upside down, and sitting on it. "Thank'ee."

"When the plugs is running, or the tide high," chimed in Bolt, "that seat keeps Tubs above water; their seats do the same for a great many members of parliament."

"Good again!" replied the waterman approvingly. He was evidently the prominent man—half buffoon, half butt—of the company. From the club to the pot-house his fellow is always to be found, although in different phases.

"Come, give us a speech, Tubs," said Bolt; "open the Rotherhithe parliament."

"That's just what I was going to do when you come in."

"Well, go on!—a speech!—a speech!" cried the others, knocking their hands on the tables.

Tubs, who appeared only anxious to be asked, and did not take much pressing, got on one of the tables, with the assistance of Bolt, so that his head almost touched the ceiling, and taking a pewter-pot of brandy and water in one

hand, whilst with the other he made a pipe trace imaginary problems from Euclid in the air, thus commenced,

“Gentlemen and ladies—”

“Ladies first,” observed Bolt, interrupting him.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” continued the orator, not offended. “The last sessions having terminated in the acquittal of several of you, much to your surprise, I thank you for this measure you have brought forward, in the discussion of which I have great satisfaction.”

There was a murmur of approbation.

“I continue to receive,” Mr. Tubs went on, “the most flattering assurances of support respecting the disposal of anything we may find by chance, from the different natives of Rosemary Lane.

“With respect to the Union, what I have to say is, that I hope we may never get into it, whilst the hospitable doors of Her Majesty’s gaols is open to all deserving characters.

“Gentlemen upon short commons,

“I have directed some supplies to be laid

before you, which I shall be happy to join, and not offended in being asked. And I prorogue this parliament until whenever you like ; first asking the member as has taken his seat this evening what he's going to stand."

As Mr. Tubs concluded his address he looked towards Vincent, in expectation of an answer.

"Mr. Vinson will do whatever is proper," observed Bolt.

"Oh, of course," returned Vincent. "Send for what you please."

"Mr. Vinson's a gentleman," said the waterman. "Whenever you turn to the temperance, and want a go of water, come to my stand, and you shall have it. There's a plug in the post at the corner."

Fresh liquor circulated, and the conversation became general, although it was full of allusions in a strange language, and mostly unintelligible to Vincent. At last the landlord informed the guests that he was about to close the house ; upon which the majority of them took their departure, including Mr. Tubs, leaving Vincent

with Bolt, and two of the seafaring-looking men whom he had first noticed.

“Now they’re off,” said Bolt, as he listened at the door until all appeared still, “I’ll tell you what we want you for. Are you willing to make a good bit of money with a little trouble?”

“I ask pardon,” growled one of the other fellows; “but, before you lets all out, Cricket, are you sure of your man?”

“Should I have brought him here if I hadn’t been?” replied Bolt shortly. “Now, look here, Vinson,—we’ll drop the ‘mister’ to save time,—there’s a chance of us coves getting rich without trouble. Would that suit your complaint?”

“It depends upon the way it’s done in,” replied Vincent. “I believe I can turn my hand to anything.”

“Well, I’ll out with it, then,” said Bolt: “here goes! The truth is, we have a crack coming off to-morrow night, not a great way from the coast, and we want your help.”

“What?” cried Vincent sharply, with a sud-

denness that made the others start—"You want me to join you in a robbery? Thank you; but I have not quite come to that yet."

"I thought the gentleman was proud from the first look of him," observed one of the mariners, with no very pleasant expression.

"Hush! nonsense!" replied Bolt. "Now, look here, Vinson. If you thinks we want you to go and break open a house, and carry off the swag yourself, you're wrong; it's no such thing."

"Well, what on earth is it then, you wish?" asked Scattergood in return.

"Why, I don't think you'd object to save three fellow-creeters from the gallows," said Bolt.

"I wish you'd drop all this damned mystery, and come to the point," exclaimed Vincent. "What is it you wish me to do?"

Mr. Bolt walked quietly to the door, and then inspected the room very carefully, as if he was suspicious of listeners lurking inside the very pewter measures. He then said to Vincent—

“Whether you are with us or not, the crack will take place. If we get well off, very good; if not, and we find ourselves in a mess, I don’t see how it can harm you to be lying off the coast in our skiff, to put us across the river. Eh?”

“I would rather not,” replied Vincent. “I think you might get somebody else”

“Nobody as could manage so well, I reckon,” replied Bolt.

“And whereabouts is it you wish’d me to be?”

“Anywhere along the banks of the river, that will give you the shortest line to Brentwood, for the house would lie on that trade. It’s called Blazes, or Babel, or Brabunts, or something like it. Why, what’s up now? How you jumped!”

“Brabants!” ejaculated Vincent, almost unconsciously. Then, recovering himself, he added, “Me?—oh no, nothing. The name struck me. I think I have heard it before.”

“Well, may we trust you? Will you be there to-morrow?”

“I will,” said Vincent earnestly. “I give you my honour, if you set store by such a thing.”

“Oh ! honour amongst—gentlemen like us, in course,” said Bolt.

The conversation finished, Vincent rose to depart. He was shown out of the front-door by the landlord, who fastened it up carefully after him.

He waited in the street for a few seconds, undecided what plan he should adopt, and then turned down a dark alley at the side of the house, which slanted down to the Thames. The tide was running down, so that he was just enabled to creep along the edge of the water upon the wet shingles to where Bolt’s skiff was still lying. Hastily unfastening the cord which held it, he launched it into the stream, and in another minute was pulling vigorously down the river, in a manner which betokened long habitude with the management of a boat.

The morning broke cold and foggy ; the banks on either side were almost invisible in the dull grey light ; whilst huge colliers were

floating lazily on the tide, looking in the mist like phantom vessels. But Vincent was still at his task, and by the first gleam of sunlight had placed several good miles between the Pool and himself, in his course down the Thames.



## CHAPTER XIX.

MR. JOE JOLLIT BECOMES JOYOUS AT GRAVESEND, WHERE  
MR. SNARRY RELIEVES HIS MIND.

FINE weather crept on as soon as blackthorn winter was over, and its effects were speedily visible upon the whole creation. Everything prepared to welcome the summer; and, simultaneously with the change of the caddis-worm into the mayfly, Mr. Joe Jollit discarded his winter toilet, bought a gent's Zephyr Cachucha, which was a great-coat of thin oatmeal-coloured blanketing, and, to use his own words, "burst forth into light and life, and delivered himself up to the *abandon* of rural pleasures." This desirable occupation was chiefly brought about by hiring a bed-room in Windmill Street, Gravesend, whither also Mr. Snarry accompanied him, to the grief of Mrs. Chicksand.

And wonderfully popular with the passengers and officers of the Topaz steamer did Mr. Joe Jollit soon become, even to being permitted to climb upon the paddle-boxes, and walk along the bridge that connects them; and his general manners were so diverting, that Mrs. Hankins's sister, who once went down by special invitation, under Mrs. Hankins's own chaperonage, so that it was impossible for the world to say anything at all about it, declared that her inevitable death would of necessity result from his pleasantries, and would be laid at his particular door, if he persisted in being so atrociously droll. What a strange animal he was!—did Mrs. Hankins ever?

Whatever were the materials to work upon, Mr. Joe Jollit's keen sense of the funny never forsook him. Whether he played an amateur obligato to "Love not," which the band on board performed unceasingly, upon the trombone of the man who went round with a faded decanter-stand to solicit coin, or whether he asked the steward at dinner for half a pint of that peculiar old port which had been two days in bottle

under the cabin stairs, or the celebrated madeira which had voyaged to Gravesend and back to improve its flavour, he was equally rich. And when he landed, he gave such full play to his facetious spirits all the way from the pier to his lodgings, that even the drivers of the many-fashioned vehicles who wait to carry timid visitors, by sheer force, and against their will, to Rochester, Canterbury, or wherever else it pleases them to transport their helpless victims, gave up chaffing with him in despair, and no longer paid any attention to his desire that they would take him "as far as they could towards Nova Scotia for a shilling." These little ebullitions of a joyous mind at first alarmed Mr. Snarry very much, until he saw that no great harm arose from them, when he enjoyed them as much as his friend; always excepting such times as Mr. Jollit chose to buy a small quantity of periwinkles, and eat them with a pin as he walked upon the pier at the fashionable time of day, for the purpose, as he observed, of making the world understand that there was nothing like pride about him, and

forcing Snarry to feel quite at his ease, and at home, even in great society.

If there was one locality upon earth more than another in which Mr. Jollit allowed his spirits to be boundingly joyous, it was within the chalky confines of Rosherville Gardens; and one fine afternoon, in extra good-humour, he was pressing the greensward of that terrestrial paradise, in company with his friend. It was really a thing to see—Mr. Jollit's deportment at Rosherville: something a person might walk a long way on a hot day, in tight boots, to behold, and not feel disappointed after all. His first funniment took place amongst the macaws, when, after addressing them in their own peculiar language, until he set them all shrieking, he would thrust his hands into his coat-tail pockets, and bending his body at a right angle, hop about the lawn in the manner of a large raven. Next he would visit the monkeys, and sitting on a rustic stool opposite to them, would imitate all their actions, and eat a bun after their manner, occasionally stopping to run round the stool upon all-fours, previously to

scratching his side rapidly with the extremities of his nails. And his dialogue with the distinguished foreigner who lets out the arrows at seven for twopence, was also a great diversion, being carried on in strange tongues, chiefly of the cabalistic dialect used by conjurors, and always ending with the phrase, "Tres-bien-voulez-vous-propria-que-maribus-paddy-whack," which, not admitting of refutation, usually finished the conversation at once.

Nor was Mr. Joe Jollit one whit less humorous when the quadrille-band struck up in the baronial barn, for the amusement of those whom the bills call "the votaries of Terpsichore;" for then he danced literally on the light and fantastic toe, especially as the *cavalier seul* in La Pastorale, for which he reserved all his powers. Sometimes he sprang from the earth, turning round twice before he came down again; at others dropped on his knee, in a graceful attitude, before his partner; and, when particularly hilarious, he would lay hold of his coat-tails, which always played a great part in his eccentricities, in the style

that ladies hold their dresses ; and then dance a graceful measure, amidst the cheers of the spectators. Indeed, so remarkable was he, that Mrs. Hankins's sister, whom he once persuaded to be his partner, "never felt so awkward in her life—really—the idea—how very absurd, to be sure !" And her distress did not terminate with the quadrille ; for when they went to one of the side-tables for refreshment, which consisted of shrimps and ginger-beer, Mr. Joe Jollit struck out a new line of humour, and commenced imitating fireworks with his mouth, until he broke two tumblers in his endeavour to personify a Catherine-wheel in full play.

"I say, Snarry, old fellow ! you're down ; what's up ?" said Mr. Jollit to his friend on the afternoon in question.

A melancholy "Nothing," which belied itself, was all the reply.

"I should think so : you look as if there was not," returned Jollit. "Why don't you be jolly?—I am. I'll jump you for a bottle of stout. Look here ; can you do this ?"

The incidental performance consisted in holding his walking-stick in each hand, and jumping over it, first forwards and then backwards. It was a stick, with a knot made like an old man's head, and very crooked and deformed; just the sort of stick you would imagine a funny man always carried, for the sake of society.

"Come, Snarry, don't mope. Why don't you tell me what's the matter?" continued the jocund Jollit, finding that his challenge was not accepted. "I won't say anything about it, you know."

"I'm afraid it is the heart," replied Snarry, in plaintive accents, with a suppressed and quivering sigh.

"What's the matter with your heart? Is it in the Highlands, or breaking for the love of Alice Grey?" inquired Mr. Joe Jollit.

Mr. Snarry shook his head, and looked up to the sky, whose floating glow spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright. Such was his inward quotation as he beheld it.

"Now, what are the odds I don't tell you

which pack the card's in?" inquired Mr. Jollit. "I mean whereabouts your thoughts are. You are thinking about that little girl with the long black hair on the first floor."

"I am afraid that it is so," replied Mr. Snarry, with plaintive mournfulness. "Jollit—my friend—you will not betray me?"

"Never!" returned Mr. Joe, with dramatic energy. "Only—I say now, Snarry, don't make a fool of yourself."

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Snarry, apparently hurt at the possibility of such an imputation.

"Oh, nothing; only those things get on so, somehow or another, especially first loves. Is she your first love?"

"I never cared in this manner for another," replied Mr. Snarry.

"I thought so," said Mr. Joe. "I've had twenty first loves, and know what it is. Let's rest here a little while."

They had arrived at the top of the cliff on which the tower is built, and now rested against the battlements. The view was pleasant, with



its diversified prospect of hill and valley, land and river, and it harmonized with Mr. Snarry's feelings. He leant against a buttress, in the attitude of a border warden on the donjon-keep; whilst Mr. Joe Jollit, having shouldered his stick, and marched as a sentinel two or three times backwards and forwards, to an air from Blue Beard, threw a handful or two of fine gravel upon a party who were having tea, with shrimps, on the lawn below, and then crouched down behind the ramparts.

"I repeat," continued that facetious gentleman, "that you must mind what you are about."

"In which way?" asked Mr. Snarry, half angrily.

"So. A young gentleman meets a young lady that pleases him. Very well: you can't grumble at that. They neither think about marriage. I don't mean, you know, but what they're both very proper; but they don't think of anything at all. Only they appear to suit one another—their notions and ideas, perhaps, go the same way; and, in consequence, the

gentleman dangles about after the lady whenever they meet. Perhaps, in her mind, the lady dangles about after the gentleman just as much, but never openly, because it's not correct."

"But what has all this to do with me, Joe?" asked Mr. Snarry.

"Well, that's what I'm coming to. This dangling goes on until the young lady herself, or most likely her friends, think it time to ask something about intentions; and then the young gentleman all of a sudden sees the folly of carrying these things too far. Now, don't you see the fix he places himself in? He has either made a fool of the girl, to say the least of it, or he is hooked, rather against his will, to marry, which is not altogether to his taste, although he was never so happy as when he was flirting with her."

The lecture was so unexpected from Mr. Jollit, that Mr. Snarry opened his eyes very wide in astonishment.

"I see you are surprised to hear me go on

like this," said Mr. Joe; "but I have got into several rows of this sort,—funny men *do* sometimes,—and so I like to warn people. Now, suppose this attachment of yours to Miss Scattergood comes to anything,—you have not much tin, and it seems she has none at all,—what would you do?"

"A cottage—" ejaculated Mr. Snarry.

"Oh, nonsense," interrupted Mr. Jollit; "that has all been found out long ago. Does she know you care for her?"

"I wished Mrs. Chicksand to hint at it," said Mr. Snarry; "and I sent her bouquets occasionally of geraniums and hot-house plants for her toilet-table."

"Try wall-flowers next time," said Jollit; "they go a great way for a small sum, like an Upper Clapton omnibus."

"But, Jollit," said Mr. Snarry imploringly, "this must remain locked in our bosoms."

"Chests, Snarry, if you please. Never lose a joke if you can help it. Locked in our chests is good. Oh, yes, of course; I shall not say a word about it. Only, if you must be a

butterfly, take my advice, and never stay near one flower too long."

"I fear it is too deep," said Mr. Snarry, with another sigh. "The sun is going down over the spot she inhabits," he continued poetically, as he looked towards the transparent fog in the west, that indicated the locality of London.

"Yes, all right," answered Mr. Jollit; "and I think we will go down ourselves, for it is getting chilly. Hark!" he added, as the sound of music, expressing the pursuit of harmony under difficulties, rose from below, "the festivity commences. Now see me take the shine out of the company."

They descended to the ball-room, and Mr. Jollit was, if anything, richer than ordinary. But Mr. Snarry sat apart from the throng of revellers, as he termed them, and lost himself in meditation until the fireworks commenced, when he again joined his friend. But even then there was not a rocket burst, whose stars did not turn themselves into Clara Scattergood's eyes as they descended. And when he arrived at home, he sat at his window, which

looked upon Windmill Hill, and ruminated upon the object of his affections, lost to everything else,—even to the uncertain notes of a flute, which a gentleman in the house used to play in bed for an hour every night before he went to sleep.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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